FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XV.

BY

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IN TWO VOLUMES

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FRANCE UNDER LOUIS XV.

CHAPTER XII.

THE AUSTRIAN ALLIANCE.

When the war of the Austrian Succession was ended by the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, Frederick declared this was only a truce, a breathing-spell, which would allow the combatants to form new combinations, and to renew the strife under more favorable conditions. His prophecy was verified, and his own conduct had much to do with changing the political system of Europe.

The origin of the Seven Years' war is usually attributed to the alliance between France and Austria, and to the endeavor of those countries to punish Frederick for his ambition and bad faith, and so reduce the power of Prussia that her place in Europe would be as insignificant as it had been under Frederick's father. But questions were to be decided more weighty than that of the balance of power on the Continent; it was from the contest between French and English influence, both in the East and the West, that a war began, of which the results were as momentous as the repulse of Saracen invasion at Poitiers, or the overthrow of the Spanish armada in the English Channel.

In the seventeenth century, the foreign possessions of France became of large importance. Both Richelieu and Colbert, in their efforts to secure for their country the foremost place among European nations, realized that she must be powerful by sea as well as by land, and under the impetus given by those statesmen to the development of her marine and to opening trade relations with distant parts of the world, France made such progress that it seemed possible she might become the great colonizing power of Europe.

As far back as the fourteenth century, numerous voyages of exploration and discovery were undertaken by French mariners; hardy sailors cruised in the Canaries and along the Gold Coast, bringing back cargoes of ivory, of spices, and of precious metals, and realizing great profits. Later, the French took an active part in the northern fisheries, and they were indefatigable in pursuit of the whale and the cod. Not until the expedition of Jacques Cartier to Canada in 1535 was there any formal occupation of remote countries in the name of France. When a beginning had been made, it was followed by similar enterprises; before the end of the sixteenth century, companies had been organized to develop trade and colonization in Canada, Sumatra, Java, and many other parts of the world. In 1608, Quebec was founded, and the colony of Canada fairly began its existence. These efforts at colonization in America were deemed unwise by those who thought the greater part of that country was a wilderness that could never become the theatre of profitable industry. "Among the things done against my opinion," writes Sully, "was the sending of the little colony to Canada this year. No sort of wealth can be hoped for from any of the countries of

the New World which lie north of the 40th degree." North of that parallel are now New England, New York, Pennsylvania, and the most populous States of the West; the great statesman foretold the future no better than men of less wisdom.

The work of settlement went on in Canada, not rapidly, but steadily. At first little more than a Jesuit mission, under Louis XIV. it could be regarded as a crown colony, and though it met with many hindrances, some from the character of the people and some from the mistakes of the government, Canada slowly increased in population and strength.

The French settlements in the Antilles were still more prosperous. Started for the most part by soldiers of fortune, by buccaneers or plain pirates, the development of these islands to some extent escaped the restraints of a pious and a paternal government. In most of the French colonies priests were in the ascendant and Protestants were warned off, but the pirates and filibusters of the West Indies were not concerned as to the orthodoxy of their fellows, and for a while, at least, there seem to have been no restraints on immigration. "I wrote our superior," said a Dominican, who was influenced by the intellectual atmosphere of the islands, "if he had scruples about employing a Lutheran called Corneille, to send him quickly to me at Martinique; it made no difference to me whether he raised Lutheran or Catholic sugar, provided only it was white." [1]

While the possessions in the West Indies became of considerable importance, the French made a beginning, though a feeble one, in South America. Little indeed was done, but the boundaries claimed for

[1] Labat, *Voyage aux Antilles.*

French Guiana included an enormous and a fertile territory, capable of great development in the future.

In North America, starting with Canada as a base of operations, the French pushed their way along the Great Lakes, the Ohio, and the Mississippi. La Salle reached the mouth of the great river, and forts were erected at various points in the South and West. Leagues were formed with many Indian tribes; rights resting on discovery, on exploration, on partial occupation, were obtained over territories more vast than all Europe, and much larger than the narrow strip along the Atlantic occupied by the English; if these claims were vague, at least they were better than those that could be asserted by any other nation, and if vigorously supported by a powerful home government, they could not be wholly disregarded.

French enterprise in the seventeenth century was as active in the East as in the West. The isles of France and of Bourbon were already important trading stations; settlements were attempted in Madagascar, the East India Company began its operations in the Indies, and a certain amount of trade, mostly in slaves, was carried on with the west coast of Africa. The marine of France was not greatly inferior to that of England, and her colonial possessions, though little developed, were considerably more extensive than those of her English rivals.

This condition of affairs changed somewhat before the close of Louis XIV.'s reign; the French navy suffered severe defeats, and the country was so exhausted during the long war of the Spanish Succession that the marine was neglected, and the English obtained an unquestioned superiority on the seas. By the peace of Utrecht, also, England made impor-

tant gains for her colonial system, while France suffered still more severe losses.

Besides the commercial advantages secured by the English, Acadia and Newfoundland were ceded to them, and Louis XIV. surrendered to Portugal all the great territory claimed by France along the Amazon; both in North and South America the influence and the possessions of France were lessened, and the treaty of Utrecht, so bitterly denounced by the English of that day, marked an important step in the development of England into the great colonial power of the world.

After the peace of Utrecht the English marine steadily increased, and their American colonies grew with a rapidity which found no parallel in any of the French possessions. Though France was more populous than England, and though the condition of her people was decidedly worse, yet comparatively few Frenchmen sought to better their fortunes in new lands. This was not due altogether to the fact that the French had little taste for emigration. As a general rule, people who are well to do are content to stay where they are, but one hundred and fifty years ago there was no general well-being such as now exists in France and keeps her citizens at home. There were other reasons that checked the rapid growth of the French colonies. If many of the French people were poor, they were also ignorant, and the idea of a journey to distant parts was beyond their mental grasp. Moreover, the government gave no judicious encouragement to colonization; even when emigration was allowed, it was so hemmed around with commercial restrictions that there was little chance for rapid and easy gains; between being poor in Gascony or Nor-

mandy and being poor in Canada the French peasant naturally chose the former. The system of laws, which long remained in force, was admirably adapted to check colonial growth, and to retard colonial development. Colbert's zeal to build up a foreign empire had not been accompanied by a just comprehension of the way to accomplish the result, and his mistakes were imitated and exaggerated by his successors. It was the theory of the French government that by the formation of trading companies, possessing exclusive rights and commercial monopolies, colonization could best be promoted. Of all possible systems, Adam Smith declared this was the best adapted to check the progress of a colony, and certainly its record of failure in France might discourage the most sanguine. In 1769, statisticians figured that fifty-five great companies, organized under the patronage of the government, and receiving support from it in the shape of trade monopolies, had ended in bankruptcy. That they made shipwreck of their own fortunes was bad; it was a worse evil that they checked the natural growth which the colonies would otherwise have enjoyed. A man rarely seeks a new and distant home unless he is attracted by the prospect of gain. But when a trading company had a monopoly of everything the colonist wished to buy, and was the only purchaser of what the colonist had to sell, the chance of gain for the settler was not enough to tempt him beyond the seas. If emigration to the French colonies was small, this was because, under the system adopted by the government, the chance of bettering one's lot was also small.

Another artificial creation checked the growth of the colonies; in many of these new possessions a

bastard feudal system was established by the home government, apparently because it believed that a Frenchman living by Lake Ontario or the Amazon should be surrounded by the same institutions as if he had remained on the banks of the Seine, that if men held lands subject to feudal duties in Burgundy, the same system should prevail at Montreal, and if the peasant of Languedoc took his wheat to be ground to the mills of his feudal superior, the peasant of Canada must do the same. Such a system was certain to check the growth of an independent agricultural population cultivating their own lands, like that which formed the bone and sinew of the English colonies in America.

Perhaps the chief cause for the failure of French colonization in America can be found in the bigotry of the government. The French, like the Spanish, had sent the missionary with the explorer, and their early settlers were always bidden to devote themselves to the enlightenment of the heathen as much as to their own temporal advancement. In this there was no harm; the treatment of the natives by French explorers was marked by much less of cruelty and bad faith than was shown by the Spanish; the zeal of French missionaries, and especially of the Jesuits, is one of the great chapters in the record of heroic self-devotion, and was by no means devoid of valuable results. The harm came from a spirit of religious exclusion that was fostered in the colonies, and from the undue influence exercised by the priests. It was well to have missionaries to convert the heathen and to guard the morals of Christians, but their numbers were excessive, and the part they took in the affairs of the state was always active and often pernicious.

Still, if the government had encouraged or had even allowed a Huguenot emigration to the colonies, no Jesuit missionaries, however fervent against heresy, could have checked it. There was considerable analogy between the position of England and France in this respect; in both of those countries the members of creeds, which had much in common in their beliefs and in the character of their followers, were exposed to the ill will of the established church. The English dissenters found refuge in distant lands, where they could enjoy religious freedom and still remain Englishmen, and they laid the foundations of a powerful nation, speaking the English tongue, and inspired by English traditions.

The French Huguenots were equally fitted to become the founders of a prosperous state; they possessed the integrity, the industry, the sturdy virtues of the English Puritans. Even in the sixteenth century, efforts had been made at Huguenot colonization. Settlements of Huguenots, under the auspices of Coligni, had been started by the Rio Janeiro and the St. John's, but they had been unsuccessful for various reasons. The colony in South America was deserted, and that in Florida was exterminated by the Spanish, alike because the colonists were intruders and were heretics. The accession of Henry IV. secured toleration and prosperity for the French Protestants in their own country, and they had no greater motive than other Frenchmen to seek to better their fortunes in distant lands. This situation changed when the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 deprived the Huguenots of the right to worship God according to their own consciences, and subjected them to grievous persecution. If the government had accompanied the

denial of religious freedom at home with a permission to carry French institutions to new lands under French control, the revocation, however unjust, might have been an act of political wisdom. The Protestants were as firmly attached to the language and institutions of their country as any class of French people; if they had been offered the opportunity to seek their fortunes in lands distant indeed, but in which they could live under the same flag, where they could call themselves Frenchmen and yet be free from religious persecution, the opportunity would have been embraced by thousands, whose industry and intelligence would have insured their prosperity and secured for France countries beyond the seas, allied in sympathy with the mother land and perpetuating what was best in French institutions and thought; they might have started French colonies that would not have been inferior to those of New England in the energy and the intelligence of their founders; pilgrim fathers would have landed by the St. Lawrence as well as at Plymouth Rock.

But the French government was firm in its narrow principles, and the colonies were closed to all but Catholics. Louis XIV. was unwilling to rule over heretics whether in Europe or in America, and in bigotry the government of Louis XV. yielded little to that of his predecessor. Huguenots asked permission to assist in the colonization of the French foreign possessions under Louis XIV., and the permission was refused. They made similar requests of the regent. To the regent the principles of Calvin and of Thomas Aquinas were all the same, but his advisers held to the principles of Louis XIV., and the request met with no more favor from the regent than from the great per-

secutor. The same views controlled the councils of Louis XV.; in all the millions of uncultivated acres that stood ready for the work of the colonist and the husbandman, there was no room for a Protestant.

French Huguenots left their own country and became English or German citizens; they remained at home, enduring as best they could the tyrannical provisions which interfered with their religion and their prosperity, but they did not help to swell the population of Canada, or Louisiana, or Guiana, or to hold those possessions for France.

Notwithstanding the losses suffered by the treaty of Utrecht, the French colonies gained more rapidly in the eighteenth century than in the seventeenth. This was largely due to the advantages they derived from a more liberal legislation than had been favored by Colbert or permitted under Louis XIV. Following the principles of commercial restriction of which he was the great advocate, Colbert forbade selling the sugar raised in the Antilles to any other country than France; the islands produced about twenty-seven million pounds, and the French consumption did not exceed twenty millions, and as a result the price, which had been fifteen francs a quintal, had fallen to five francs by 1713. Sugar was the chief production, and the fall produced bankruptcy and universal distress. In 1717, this prohibition was done away with under the more liberal administration of Law; French goods imported into the islands were free of duty, and on articles exported the duties were reduced. The prosperity of Martinique, Guadeloupe, and the other French Antilles advanced by leaps and bounds. From 1711 to 1788 the exportation of sugar from San Domingo grew from eleven to one hundred and ninety-

three millions. However disastrous in their immediate results were the efforts of the Mississippi Company and the great enterprises of Law, they did much to stimulate French commerce, and to increase trade between the mother country and her foreign possessions. In the eighteenth century, Louisiana enjoyed a prosperity which was hitherto unknown, and in 1731, it at last escaped from the hands of a privileged company and secured the measure of commercial liberty that was allowed a crown colony; it increased steadily in wealth and population.

To some extent Canada shared in this progress. The effort to exploit that country by means of a commercial company was also abandoned, and the colonists had a better chance to improve their lot; in 1721, the population of the province was twenty-five thousand; when the Seven Years' war began, it had grown to almost eighty thousand. This increase was small when compared with the growth of the English colonies in America, for at this period they numbered over a million; but the military strength of the two nations could not be judged solely by these figures. Not only was a warlike spirit more common among the French colonists, not only could Canada furnish a much larger number of good soldiers than could be found in any English colony of the same size, but the French were united, while experience had shown the difficulty of inducing the thirteen colonies to act harmoniously and with equal zeal for a common cause. French America was in little danger of conquest, if it could be assured of a reasonable measure of support from the home government.

There were other offsets to the advantage which the English possessed in the number of colonists.

The French have shown special skill in dealing with inferior nationalities, and in America they obtained the confidence and assistance of the Indians to a much greater extent than their English-speaking neighbors. With the forts established in the West, the alliances with Indian tribes, the military qualities of the settlers, and the aid that might fairly be expected from the home government, it seemed possible for the French to retain the most of their possessions in North America.

Even if the future colonization of the West was destined to fall into the hands of English-speaking people, in another part of the world it seemed probable that the French would remain the masters. India was a densely settled country, and on account of its climate persons of European birth could never form any large portion of the population; but while native inhabitants would continue to cultivate the soil, their destinies could be controlled by a small body of men of higher civilization and more vigorous character. This possibility was first realized by Dupleix, and as a result of his sagacious and aspiring policy the French exercised an influence in India far more extensive than that of the English. Dupleix's ambition was checked by the genius of Clive, but the fate of India was still undecided, and if the French government had given its representative the support to which he was entitled, there was good reason to expect that France would become the mistress of a large part of the former empire of Aurungzebe.

Both in the East and the West the two nationalities were in close contact; their rivalry brought on the Seven Years' war, and the victory of England was the most important result of that contest. The issue was

forced by the English people, alike by those whose home was still England, by their colonists in America, and their representatives in India; the war owed its origin more to national aspirations than to the ambitious schemes of rulers, and perhaps for that reason it was momentous in its consequences. In both countries those in power desired peace. In England, Newcastle was premier, a man whose timidity and irresolution were notorious; and the fears of George II. for Hanover made him look with apprehension on another war with France.

All classes of the French were still more averse to the prospect of renewed hostilities. The martial ardor of Louis XV. had long been extinct: he appeared no more on the field of battle, and had taken no part in the final campaigns of the late war; he did not wish to be disturbed in the ignoble routine of his pleasures by embarrassing questions of foreign policy. Mme. de Pompadour occupied the place which in England would have been held by a prime minister having the enthusiastic support of the Commons, and her voice was for peace. Later, her ambition was excited by new combinations on the Continent, and she became eager for the prosecution of the war against Frederick, but she was indifferent to the fate of the French colonies, and had no wish to see a great struggle begin which might result in lessening her influence.

Nor had the French people any more desire for hostilities than their king; except with a few far-sighted men, the question of colonial development aroused no such interest in France as in England; the last war had been long, expensive, and unproductive, and so general was the distrust in the government that no one felt any confidence in the results of another con-

flict. This feeling of mistrust was justified by the weakness of the ministry, and it was shared by the ministers themselves. With hardly an exception they were men of small capacity, and they had the timidity which often accompanies inefficiency; one of the great crises in French history was approaching, and, as a result of the listlessness of Louis XV. and the feminine caprices of Mme. de Pompadour, not one man of large ability could be found in the councils of France.

However reluctant ministers might be, the struggle for predominance between the two nations was irrepressible, and almost at the same time hostilities broke out in lands three thousand miles apart; the sun never set upon the contest which decided the fate of countries that had been civilized when Gaul and Britain were inhabited by barbarians, and determined the ownership of fields and forests in which a white man had never set foot.

While there was still a possibility of French success in the East, the government not only refused to give any aid, but removed the one man who might have succeeded unaided. In 1754, Dupleix was recalled and disgraced in order to soothe British sensibility, and his dismissal secured the speedy predominance of the English East India Company. The course of events in the East has already been described, and the overthrow of the French empire in India was for England the most important result of the Seven Years' war.

In the far West the attack upon France was carried on with still greater vigor. The consequences of the war which ensued were of vast importance on the future development of America, but it cannot be denied that the English and their colonists proceeded

with little regard for the laws of nations as laid down in Grotius or Puffendorf. It may perhaps be said in their justification that the issues involved were too important to be determined by any close inspection of treaties or preëmptive rights. The French had acquired over large portions of North America such claims as could be based on prior exploration, on building an occasional fort, or making a treaty with some wandering tribe. In Canada a colony had been established, and in Louisiana the efforts of the Mississippi Company had not been altogether lost. But the English settlement had proceeded on a far more vigorous scale, and the principles on which their colonies were founded admitted of a development that could not be hoped for in those of their rivals; the destinies of the West were involved in the growth of the civil and religious principles which had taken root in New England.

There was a wisdom exceeding the foresight of statesmen which led the English-speaking people to force a settlement of the great question whether France or England should control the future development of India and America. No time could have been chosen that would have been more unfavorable for France; at no period in her history had she been governed with less ability: her king was a sluggish debauchee, and at the head of affairs was a woman controlled by vanity and caprice; the navy had been allowed to decay that palaces might be built for favorites, and pensions be paid to idlers; the debt was large; public spirit was at a low ebb, and the importance of the issues involved was realized by few Frenchmen. Louisiana and Canada, said the ministers, are immense and uncultivated regions, which

yield almost nothing to France. Voltaire wrote of the acres of snow, in contending for which the government wasted more than all Canada was worth. Even Frederick declared that the game was not worth the candle, and that it was folly for two nations to spend their men and money fighting over those barren wastes.[1]

Such had not been the views of the great French statesmen. Richelieu and Colbert saw that only by the possession of a foreign empire could their country exert the influence or gain the wealth which it was their purpose to secure for her. Had such men been at the head of the government in 1756, with a king who would have seconded their efforts, India, Canada, and the valley of the Ohio would not have been so lightly lost, and some portion, certainly, of those great possessions would have been saved for France.

In the wording of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle there was abundant opportunity for dispute, yet no diplomatic paper, no matter how precise its terms, could have prevented a war on which one of the parties was resolved. By the treaty, Acadia was ceded to England, but its limits were undefined; the English said that it included not only Nova Scotia, but all the lands between New England and the Gulf of St. Lawrence; the French replied that the grant conveyed only the one twentieth part of that territory. Questions of still more importance rose in the West. The French claimed the valley of the Ohio and all the territory west of it; the English colonies asserted that by founding settlements on the Atlantic coast

[1] The arguments of the ministers are stated by Knyphausen to Frederick, December 8, 1755, and Frederick gives his views in a letter to the Duke of Brunswick of August 12.

they gained a right to extend them to the Pacific, and they, like their rivals, could bring forward vague grants from Indian tribes, which were convenient for purposes of argument, and of very little value otherwise. So far as rights over vast and uncultivated portions of the world could be obtained by exploration and some semblance of prior occupation, the French title was the better. If one considered actual settlement and the prospect of turning prairie and forest, occupied only by wild beasts and wilder Indians, into the home of civilized men, the English colonists could justly assert that the record of what they had done entitled them to carry the work further; that neither sailing down the Mississippi, nor blazoning fleurs-de-lis on the trunk of some forest tree could give a right to interfere with men who were ready to change barren wastes into prosperous states.

By 1754, the contending nations were actually at war, and in the following year Braddock marched to drive the French from Fort Duquesne, and met with his memorable defeat. These hostilities on land were accompanied by still more vigorous measures at sea. In 1755, the French sent reinforcements to their Canadian colonists, and the English pursued the fleet with instructions to destroy any French vessels bound for North America; they succeeded in coming up with two French men-of-war, fired upon them, and compelled them to surrender. This proceeding was followed by others which bore much resemblance to wholesale piracy; English cruisers were directed to capture any French ships they could find, whether men-of-war or merchant vessels, and in a few months they took over three hundred ships and several thousand French sailors, and brought them to English ports. During all

this time, no war had been declared; England and France were nominally at peace, while their colonists were fighting with one another in India and in America, and English cruisers were declaring good prize every ship that floated the French flag.

The conduct of the English ministers was extraordinary, but that of the French was still more so. France had always been punctilious concerning questions of national honor; Louis XIV. was ready to go to war because his ambassador was affronted at Rome and denied precedence by Spain; but now the French ministers were like sheep before the shearer. They did indeed protest against the action of the English, they bewailed the capture of their men-of-war, they insisted that taking merchant ships in time of peace was plain piracy, but they contented themselves with protesting. The object of so pusillanimous a policy was nominally to put England wholly in the wrong, though there was little likelihood that any other nation would espouse the cause of France, because she allowed her ships to be sunk and her forts captured without either retaliating or declaring war. The real reason for submitting to a long series of indignities was that the French ministers were uncertain what course to pursue; they were not ready for hostilities, the condition of the navy was deplorable, they had but one hundred and thirty vessels of all descriptions, carrying fifty-two hundred guns, while the English had over three hundred, carrying twelve thousand guns; they disliked being insulted, and yet dared take no step to avenge the affronts inflicted on them.[1] Notwithstanding their meekness, it was plain that war was inevitable; the English would abate nothing of their

[1] *Mémoires sur la Marine*, given by Luynes, xiv. 137 *et seq.*

claims, the French must at last make some effort to assist their colonies and to protect their merchantmen. Already the conduct of the French ministry was so extraordinary that a keen observer like Frederick was inclined to think that they had been bribed by England. "It is painful for me to see how weakly the French ministers act in reference to England," he wrote his ambassador; "they behave like men made of cotton."[1] "What is most surprising is the incredible weakness of their conduct in view of the open insults the English have offered France; their behavior is the most pitiable that can be imagined; they act like children who think they won't be seen if they keep their hands before their faces. I fear this ministry will become the laughing-stock of Europe."[2] He directed his representative to ascertain whether such behavior was due to corruption or to some other cause. "There must be something," he wrote, "to hold these ministers in this lethargy, for their conduct surpasses all imagination."[3] For once his sagacity was at fault; they were passive, not because they were paid to do nothing, but because they were afraid to do anything.

Frederick had long seen that war would be the ultimate result, and he prepared for this contingency with his usual promptness.[4] Before the conflict began, the great European powers had formed new combinations, and the dissolution of the old alliances which had long been foreshadowed was now accomplished.

[1] Frederick to Knyphausen, April 12, 1755.

[2] *Ib.*, August 9, and September 23.

[3] *Ib.*, November 22.

[4] *Pol. Cor.*, xi. 55 *et pas.* The odds were ten to one that war would result, Frederick wrote in February, 1755.

Maria Theresa had never relinquished the hope of recovering Silesia; she felt that it had been taken from her by violence and bad faith, in which she was quite right, and though Frederick's possession had been repeatedly guaranteed by solemn treaties, she knew from her own experience of how little weight were treaties or guarantees. During the last war, the queen had several times endeavored to make terms with the French, believing that, if Frederick were abandoned by his allies, she could compel him to restore what he had seized; in 1745, she made overtures for a separate peace with France; when negotiations were in progress at Aix-la-Chapelle, Kaunitz had again suggested that France and Austria would find their advantage in relinquishing ancient animosities, that the great Catholic powers should unite and insure the tranquillity of Europe and the welfare of the Church.

None of these overtures were favorably received by the French; opposition to Austria had so long been one of their traditions that there were few who found in changed conditions any reason for a change in policy. In the increasing power of Prussia they saw only a useful rival to Austrian influence. In 1745, Argenson declared that the acquisition of Silesia by Prussia was worth more to France than any new territories she could gain for herself; in 1748, the French decided to accept the terms proposed by England, and insisted on renewed guarantees for Frederick's possession of the province.

If the French government was inclined to cling to Prussia as a friend, Frederick was by no means equally convinced that this alliance was of advantage to him. In France the spirit of routine was strong, but Fred-

erick was not a man who followed an established policy because it cost an intellectual effort to foresee the results of a new combination; from the quickness of his perceptions he was attracted by the advantages to be derived from new experiments, and as his allies were rarely successful in satisfying the excessive demands which he was wont to make upon their zeal, he was always discontented with them. Twice during the war of the Austrian Succession he had abandoned the French and made terms for himself, and though he continued a nominal ally of France, his opinion of the inefficiency of Louis XV.'s government was as outspoken as it was just. England on the other hand, though she had been the friend of Maria Theresa, had by no means been the enemy of Frederick. It was largely due to her interposition that Austria had acceded to the treaty of Breslau; it was largely due to the threat of English abandonment that Maria Theresa had again ratified the cession of Silesia by the peace of Dresden. When at Aix-la-Chapelle the empress queen objected to any guarantee of Frederick's title, the English insisted that this should be made a part of the treaty.

At that time, Frederick had expressed his willingness to join the maritime powers; erelong, he said, he should need to take no further precautions with France, and then he would be ready to enter into a close and cordial alliance with England and Holland; common interests, a common faith, and common blood would make fast the bonds between England and Prussia.[1] Whatever were the secret affinities between

[1] Report of Legge, May 11, 1748. "The king's heart is still German, notwithstanding the French embroideries which appear upon the surface."

the different states, some years passed with little change in their relations; the French government was occupied with the quarrels between the Parliament and the clergy; in England, neither Pelham nor the Duke of Newcastle desired the political and financial complications that another war would create; Frederick and Maria Theresa were content to watch the progress of affairs.

The prospect of a more intimate union between England and Prussia was diminished by a quarrel over some vessels which had been captured by the English during the late war. The long-suffering which the French showed when the English attacked their men-of-war and made prizes of their merchant ships was no part of Frederick's character, and his dislike for his uncle, George II., made him specially punctilious in dealings with that sovereign. Even the prospect of hostilities with England did not appall him; he knew that he had no seacoast exposed to the attacks of the English navy, and that Hanover lay temptingly open to invasion. "I will do all I can to avoid war with England," he wrote in 1753, "but neither the formidable combination of my enemies, nor the superiority of their forces, nor the extent of their resources, will make me bend my knee before the arrogance of the English king." [1] These quarrels did not result in war, but Frederick continued to regard France as his most active ally, and to apply to her for aid in his various disputes with other powers.[2]

In 1755, the hostilities between France and England threatened to involve the continent, and European sovereigns began to make preparation for the

[1] Frederick to Lord Marischal, November 8, 1753.

[2] See his correspondence, *passim*, 1751–54.

emergencies which might arise. The change which followed in the political system of Europe, the alliance between powers which had been immemorial enemies, has, with but few dissentient voices, been attributed to the fickleness of France; that country, it has been said by historians, became the tool of Austria, and Frederick was forced to become the ally of England. Such a statement is almost the reverse of the fact; France did indeed become the tool of Austria, but it was only when Frederick had first decided that he preferred England as an ally. As he himself said, the treaty between Prussia and England changed the system of Europe.[1]

Until hostilities began between France and England, the prospect of peace on the Continent had seemed unusually favorable. The French entertained no projects which could excite apprehension; Frederick was content with the gains of the last war, and waited for some future opportunity to increase the strength of the growing state, which he had already made one of the great powers of Europe. Certainly Maria Theresa never for one day abandoned the hope of recovering the province of which she had been despoiled, but she saw no immediate prospect of this; the overtures which had been made to France years before had met with no response, and it was impossible to take her revenge upon Frederick so long as he had the French as allies.

Yet such was the condition of continental politics that war between any two powers might involve all the others. In the early part of 1755, war seemed imminent, and it was assumed, almost as a matter of course, that France and Prussia would again be found

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xii. 472.

on the same side. The expectation of the statesmen of Europe was not verified, and in the memoirs prepared years afterwards, Frederick has offered some explanation of the reasons which led him to abandon old friends for new ones. The court of Versailles, he says, seemed to regard the king of Prussia as the Porte might a despot of Wallachia, as a subordinate prince, bound to take up arms when orders were sent him; when it desired to carry the war against England into Hanover, the French minister told Knyphausen to write the king of Prussia to assist in the expedition, and that he would find plenty to plunder. "I replied," adds Frederick, "that such propositions might be made to others, but I trusted in the future they would distinguish the persons with whom they were treating."[1] As so often in Frederick's career, the explanation of his conduct which he decided to offer posterity has been accepted without question, and yet it bore a very remote resemblance to the facts.

The problem is of sufficient importance to deserve examination, and in order to understand the conduct of the parties, it is necessary to consider their relations for some years prior to this time. In 1741, immediately after the seizure of Silesia, a treaty was executed between Prussia and France, by which each party guaranteed to the other its possessions in Europe. This treaty by its terms was limited to fifteen years, and expired in June, 1756. Not only had it not been abrogated, but at a very recent period the French had taken action under it in Frederick's behalf. In 1753, when it seemed possible that his quarrel with the English would result in war, the French, at Frederick's request, notified George II.

[1] *Mémoires de ma vie.*

that if he attacked Prussia they should send troops to the assistance of their ally.[1]

Little more than a year later, when it seemed probable that France and England would become involved in war, Frederick at once advised his allies as to the best mode of procedure, and his advice was judicious. In April, 1755, he wrote Knyphausen, his representative at Paris: "The idea has suggested itself to me whether it would not be well for France, should King George declare war, to send at once a good-sized body of troops into Hanover and seize upon it, and then ask that prince if he would not be pleased to have peace again. Insinuate this adroitly to Rouillé . . . that he may not suspect me unjustly of wishing to increase the animosity between France and England."[2] This intimation was most acceptable to the French; the English were stronger on the sea, and an invasion of England could not be undertaken with success; the only opportunity of utilizing the superior strength of the French army was by an invasion of Hanover; even if the English were indifferent to the calamities of the electorate, nothing else would be so painful to their king. Rouillé therefore received Frederick's advice with pleasure, and in reply made a suggestion, which might certainly have been foreseen when the

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, x. 147, 9, report of Mitchell, October 26, etc.

[2] Frederick to Knyphausen, April 5, 1755. I have taken the account of Frederick's part in the negotiations which preceded the Seven Years' war entirely from his own correspondence. His agents may sometimes have misunderstood or misrepresented the king's views, but there is no danger of misunderstanding Frederick's letters to his own ministers. This correspondence puts these transactions in a very different light from his memoirs, on which innumerable writers have relied as their authority.

relations of the parties are considered. Only two years before, the French had notified England that they would take up arms in Frederick's behalf; would he not now be willing to assist in the step which he had himself advised, and invade Hanover as the ally of France?

So far from demanding his aid, the French minister told Knyphausen that he knew Frederick's engagements with France did not bind him to such a measure, but as their interests were common, he hoped the king might be inclined to act against the common enemy.[1] As this request was in answer to Frederick's own suggestion for an invasion of Hanover, and certainly did not resemble an order issued by the Porte to some tributary power, so also Frederick's response was far from being in the tone of offended dignity which he has seen fit to describe in his memoirs. He did not, indeed, wish to involve himself in hostilities; he had not yet decided where his interests lay, and his desire was if possible to avoid war altogether. Therefore he wrote his representative to explain to the French minister that sixty thousand Russians encamped each summer near his frontier, Saxony was in alliance with England, he had constantly to guard against Austria, and he was reluctant to undertake an invasion of Hanover; but he added, "You will answer Rouillé in the softest and most measured terms, and say that I will always undertake anything in my power for the interests of France."[2]

[1] Report of Knyphausen, April 25, 1755.

[2] Frederick to Knyphausen, May 6, 1755. He writes a little later: "Vous glisserez d'ailleurs bien adroitement et en termes bien doux, qui ne sentent le moindrement le reproche," etc.

Though Frederick was unwilling to act with the French, he was still ready to furnish them with advice, and he now suggested that their true policy was to invade the Low Countries, of which they could make themselves masters in a campaign. The results of such a step would have been advantageous to Frederick, but not to the French. The Low Countries belonged to Austria, and with her France had no quarrel; suddenly to invade the possessions of Maria Theresa, with no pretense of justification, would not only be the act of highwaymen, but in addition to England, with which France was already at war, she would have Austria to contend with. For Frederick the plan had manifest advantages: he knew well that the hope of regaining Silesia was never absent from Maria Theresa's mind, but if she became involved in war with France, he would be relieved from any present anxiety.[1] The French ministers did not respond to this suggestion, and Frederick then intimated that if the assistance of Denmark could be obtained for an invasion of Hanover, possibly he might be induced to act with them.[2]

Thus matters stood between France and Prussia in the autumn of 1755. Frederick had not agreed to

[1] "Elle me jureroit sur l'autel de vouloir être mon amie que je ne la croirois, qu'autant qu'elle ne trouvera pas d'occasion et de moment favorable pour me nuire." Frederick to Klinggraeffen, January 19, 1751.

[2] Frederick to Knyphausen, July and August, 1755. "Vous ajouterez que la situation particulière ne me permettant pas d'agir ouvertment, sans que la Porte ottomane ne se fût déclarée en faveur de la France, et que, d'ailleurs, je ne saurais agir contre l'Hollande, à moins que l'alliance entre Danemark et moi ne soit constatée et que celuici ne se joignît à l'entreprise sur l'Hanovre."

take up arms against England, but so far as advice was concerned, the French could not have had a more zealous ally.

The signs of an approaching contest led another power to resume efforts which had thus far met with no success. Though the overtures made by Maria Theresa to end the traditional hostility between the Houses of Hapsburg and Bourbon had not been favorably received, she did not abandon the idea. She was heartily wearied of the English alliance; she felt that she had much ground for discontent with them as allies, that they had forced her to make great sacrifices, that they had agreed without her privity to the terms of an odious treaty. "My God, how I have been treated by your government," she said in her wrath to the English ambassador.[1] A distaste springing from mutual weariness grows up between great states as well as between private friends, and at the close of the war of the Austrian Succession almost every party to the contest felt more inclined to complain of its allies than of its enemies.

The questions agitating Maria Theresa's mind are shown by a curious consultation with her advisers which she held soon after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle.

In March, 1749, she directed the members of her council to submit their written opinions as to the foreign policy which could most wisely be pursued.[2] In Austria, as in France, most of the advisers of the crown were men of mediocre capacity; the views which had been adopted in their youth were sure to meet their approval in age; the counselors of the

[1] Raumer, *Beiträge zur neueren Geschichte*, ii. 226.

[2] Eigenhändige Resolution der Kaiserin auf den Vortrag vom 7 Marz, 1749.

empress, among whom was her husband, the emperor, submitted their opinions with more or less of prosiness, but with considerable unanimity, and their judgment was that in the future, as in the past, Austria must be the enemy of France, and find her advantage in an alliance with the maritime states; thus only could the balance of power in Europe be maintained; such a policy had been deemed wise in the seventeenth century, and was therefore wise in the eighteenth.

Among these commonplace dissertations there was one which attracted attention by the novelty of its views. It was prepared by the youngest member of the council, a man whose active mind and acute talents had already gained the confidence of his mistress. Count Kaunitz gave the first formal exposition of the novel policy that was ultimately adopted. Formerly, he argued, Austria had to contend with two traditional enemies, France and Turkey, but to these had been added a third, far more dangerous than the others; the king of Prussia, said Kaunitz, was now the most powerful, the most dangerous, and the most inveterate enemy of the House of Austria; by his conquest of Silesia he could strike at the very heart of their possessions and inflict the most deadly blow; there was but one remedy, the lost must be regained, the recovery of Silesia must be the great object of Austrian policy. But it was impossible to take this province from Frederick without the aid of France. Russia was governed by cliques; her policy changed with every new favorite and every new lover, and the maritime powers would not go to war against Frederick to deprive him of Silesia. For almost two centuries France had indeed been Austria's foe, she had done her grievous harm, and had added to the wrongs

of centuries the last and worst crime in an endeavor to deprive Maria Theresa of her lawful inheritance; but all this mattered not now; the danger to be feared was not from Louis, but from Frederick; to draw France from her Prussian alliance would indeed be difficult, but it was not impossible; at Aix-la-Chapelle the chief effort of the French had been to procure advantages for Louis's son-in-law, Don Philip; the offer of new possessions for him might turn them from allies into enemies of Frederick.[1]

Such a programme seemed bewildering to many of the ancient counselors of Maria Theresa, but it was in accordance with the views of the empress herself. The influence which Kaunitz had already gained over his mistress continued to increase, and in 1750 he was sent as ambassador to Versailles, to see what progress he could make towards forming the alliance between France and Austria, which he had declared to be the true policy for both nations.

In October of that year he arrived at Paris. No one could have been better fitted to obtain a favorable hearing at a court alike brilliant and frivolous, and where an indolent king was controlled by those who could divert his mind and dispel his ennui. Kaunitz was then a man of about forty; he was tall, handsome, and possessed graces both of body and mind; no courtier of Versailles could turn a phrase more neatly or pay a more felicitous compliment, or apparently was more entirely absorbed in pleasures and trifles. The new ambassador became a leader among the fops of the court; he established himself at the magnificent Palais Bourbon, and there, surrounded by a numerous suite, he entertained with much splendor.

[1] The arguments of Kaunitz are given by Arneth, t. iv.

He gave much time to his dress, and to embellishing the beauty with which nature had endowed him; each detail of his costume was arranged with care; it was said that he had always four mirrors before which he could adjust every ribbon and lace; while diplomats waited in his antechamber, the count was often employed in meditations on the lining of a coat or the design of a frill.

But those who thought that in the Austrian minister they had to deal with an empty and conceited fop fell into grievous error. He was as frivolous in his tastes as he was profound in affairs, said Frederick of his lifelong enemy. "I should have supposed," wrote an acquaintance, "that he was more occupied with caring for his hair, his dress, and his complexion, than for the interests of his country, but the error of such an opinion was soon conceded by all." Even in his gallantries Kaunitz never forgot his mission; he devoted himself, not only to the ladies of the court, but to the daughters of rich financiers; in the intimacy of families that were proud to entertain the famous Austrian ambassador, he learned of the strength and financial condition of France from men who could inform him far more accurately than any minister at Versailles. His observations enabled him to pass a correct judgment upon the French government. "The more I see of this court," he wrote, "and the interior administration of this monarchy, the more I discover its defects. It is a pair of horses which draw different ways. . . . Most things are done by intrigue and cabal." [1]

While Count Kaunitz gained the favor of all, he could not arrange an alliance between France and

[1] Kaunitz to Koch, 1752.

Austria; the tradition which attributes the union of these countries to his mission is one of the many fables which make up the legendary history of this period. He did indeed gain advantages which were not to be underestimated in a personal government; he obtained the friendship both of the king and of Mme. de Pompadour, and these personal likings, he wrote, though not necessarily valuable, yet at times might prove of great importance.[1] He knew well, however, the difference between civil words and favorable treaties, and if his mission was not a failure, still he by no means accomplished all that had been hoped.

If Louis spoke politely of Maria Theresa, wrote Kaunitz toward the end of his stay, this was only a matter of friendship, and it was always the Prussian king who controlled French politics. His own arguments, he added, however just and well founded, could not induce the French court to change its system and choose Austria instead of Prussia for its ally.[2] If the ambassador could have read the instructions which at that very time were given the minister at Berlin, he might have seen with regret how correct was his opinion. The French representative was told that the glory and the security of the king of Prussia must have a great part in the considerations which controlled the action of France, and he was bidden to cultivate the friendship existing between the two countries.[3] In 1753, Kaunitz left the court where he had gained friends, but not allies; he returned to

[1] Kaunitz to Koch, August 22, 1751.

[2] *Ib.*, 1752. "Je ne me flatte pas que nos representations les plus solides fassent changer cette cour de principe et de système." Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, 1753.

[3] Instructions to La Touche, May, 1752.

Vienna to become chancellor and prime minister, a position which he held for almost forty years.

The relations between France and Austria continued to be amicable, but no further effort was made to form a closer alliance until the outbreak of hostilities between France and England. The English required no aid in a maritime war, but there were two dangers on the Continent against which they wished to guard: the French might invade Hanover, or they might seize some portion of the Low Countries and impair the barrier which English statesmen believed requisite for the liberty of Holland and the prosperity of England. Early in 1755, the English ambassador asked Maria Theresa to furnish an additional force for the protection of the Low Countries against a possible invasion by the French. His overtures were not favorably received. Her allies, so the empress felt, insisted that she should contribute largely to the defense of a barrier which was for their benefit and not for hers, and at the same time they denied her right to develop the resources of the country and make of it a prosperous tributary to the Austrian empire.[1] Thirty years before, her father had endeavored to make Ostend a great commercial port, but England and Holland had declared that the prosperity of the Low Countries would be at their cost, and had threatened war unless such efforts were abandoned, and by reason of their protests any endeavor to develop the commerce of the Austrian possessions was discontinued. "I am not the sovereign of the Low Countries," said Maria Theresa to the English envoy, her voice rising in her excitement until it could be heard in the adjoining room, "since I am not allowed

[1] Kaunitz to Colloredo, March 4, 1755.

to promote the welfare of my own subjects." It was to the alliance between the two countries, she continued, that England owed her prosperity and her greatness, while it had cost Austria the lives of her soldiers and the ruin of her citizens. The English envoy asked her to send twenty-five thousand men to the Netherlands; she could spare only twelve thousand, she replied, for any day her neighbor, the king of Prussia, might invade her territories at the head of eighty thousand men, and it was her first duty to protect herself.[1]

Her minister also met the English demands with the statement that Prussia was now the danger against which Austria must guard, and Prussia, as well as France, should be included among the enemies to be attacked. "The rise of that power," said Kaunitz, "had changed the old system of Europe," and it was plain that the chancellor was more ready for war in Silesia than in Flanders. Thus the ancient allies could no longer agree; the English wished to form a coalition against France; the Austrians had no desire to begin a war, unless they could see some prospect of the recovery of Silesia. For the English to assist in such an attempt was madness, their minister said, and they now made overtures to Frederick.[2]

As it was evident that England would not join in hostilities against Prussia, and it was certain that a great war was beginning in which all Europe might become involved, the empress and her minister resolved once again to make the effort which had so often failed, and to suggest some plan by which immemorial enemies could find their advantage in joint

[1] Keith to Holderness, May 22, 1755; Maria Theresa to Colloredo, April 3 and 24, 1755.

[2] Holderness to Mitchell, October 10, 1755.

action. In August, 1755, Count Kaunitz sent to Starhemberg, the Austrian minister at Paris, a detailed plan for a combination between Austria and France. In this document, Kaunitz said there was good reason to believe that England would soon form an alliance with the king of Prussia, hostile to the houses of Austria and Bourbon, and full of peril to the Catholic religion; to meet these dangers the two countries must join their interests, and as an inducement to such a union Austria would consent to give a principality in the Low Countries to Louis's son-in-law, Don Philip of Spain, and would assist the Prince of Conti to be chosen king of Poland. In return, France must renounce her alliance with the king of Prussia, who certainly was already making his plans to renounce his alliance with France.[1]

Considering the nature of these propositions and the need of secrecy if they were to have any chance of success, they could not be submitted through the ordinary channels of diplomatic intercourse; they must therefore be brought to the attention of the king through the medium of some one who possessed a large influence over Louis, and who would be apt to secure for them a friendly reception. There was doubt as to the proper person; Kaunitz hesitated between the Prince of Conti and Mme. de Pompadour, and he left it to Starhemberg to make his own choice between the two. Conti, though holding no public office, was engaged in that secret diplomacy in which Louis delighted, and in which an absolute king often endeavored to defeat, by subterranean manœuvres, the policy to which he had given public approval. The Austrian ambassador decided, however, that Mme. de

[1] Kaunitz to Starhemberg, August 21, 1755; Arneth, t. iv.

Pompadour would be the better channel through which to reach the king, and on August 31, he wrote her asking for a conference in which he could submit important propositions from his mistress. She was flattered to find herself in the secret of negotiations which might change the face of Europe, but as she could not discuss such matters unaided, she chose for her agent and adviser the Abbé Bernis.

Bernis was a gentleman of good family and small possessions. He came to Paris to push his fortunes, and decided upon the church as offering the best hopes of promotion; he was a pleasant companion, and acquired a certain literary reputation by turning out verses which were smooth if not otherwise remarkable. Such talents secured him a seat in the Academy when he was only twenty-nine, and they helped his advancement on a larger field. The abbé was one of the early admirers of Mme. de Pompadour, and when she gained the favor of Louis XV., he profited by her elevation. It was said that he wrote pretty verses, which the king sent the favorite as his own composition, and then indited ingenious replies for the use of the marquise. At all events he made himself both useful and agreeable; he was sent as ambassador to Venice, where he acquitted himself with credit, and he was now selected to confer with the Austrian ambassador and receive propositions which, for the present at least, were intended for the king alone, and could not be submitted to his ministers. In September, 1755, the negotiators charged with such momentous interests met at the little pleasure-house of Babiole, on the terrace that extended before Mme. de Pompadour's château of Belle Vue at Meudon. There Starhemberg submitted the proposals of Kaunitz for an alliance between France

and Austria, and asked a promise, not indeed to join in an attack upon Frederick, but not to interfere in Frederick's defense. These propositions were then transmitted to Mme. de Pompadour, and thus reached the ear of the king.

The influence of Mme. de Pompadour was of weight in securing the king's approval for the treaty which resulted from the negotiations that now began, but Louis himself was inclined toward such a change in policy, and the part which his favorite took in the detail of these matters was not large; she was represented by her agent, and contented herself with extending her favor to the new combination.[1] The familiar story that attributes her zeal to a private letter with which Maria Theresa honored her, and to the contemptuous reception which Frederick had accorded to her advances, has been proved to be one of the many fables which imaginative historians have woven about this period.[2] Maria Theresa never wrote the letter which has been denounced as unworthy of a woman of her exalted rank and fervent piety, nor did Frederick ever do so foolish a thing as to repel any advances made to him by Mme. de Pompadour. Even if the empress had seen fit to send a letter to the favorite, it is hard to see wherein she would have deserved all the virtuous indignation which has been excited by her supposed offense. She was a woman

[1] She attended only one of the conferences with Starhemberg. *Mém. de Bernis*, i. 225.

[2] The question of the supposed letter of Maria Theresa has been finally disposed of by Arneth in his *Geschichte Maria Theresias*, t. iv. There was never any authority for it but gossiping chronicles, which deserve no place among the trustworthy sources of information for this period.

and a pure woman, but she was also a ruler, and as such bound to deal with those whom she found in power; every one knew that Mme. de Pompadour exerted a greater influence over the king of France than any other person; so far as rank was concerned, she had quite enough to entitle her to receive letters from any sovereign, without this seeming extraordinary: she was a marchioness, she had the rank of a duchess, she was a lady in waiting upon the queen of France. Certainly her character was low, immoral, and despicable, but a ruler who refused to have dealings with those who held power in other lands, unless their moral character was satisfactory, would find the course of diplomatic relations difficult. No one complained because Maria Theresa wrote letters of friendship to Louis XV., who was much worse than his mistress, or because she corresponded on terms of amity with the Empress Elizabeth, who was quite as immoral a woman as Mme. de Pompadour; no one complained because Frederick the Great corresponded with Mme. de Châteauroux. Frederick was a man and Maria Theresa was a woman, but each was a ruler, and as such bound to treat those in power with courtesy and without scrutinizing their moral character.

But as matter of fact the empress never wrote to Mme. de Pompadour; no such letter has ever been found; the story, which has been so implicitly accepted, rested on the loosest gossip; it was expressly contradicted by Maria Theresa, who was too proud a woman to lie about what she had done;[1] what is most convincing of all, the official records show exactly what letters were written, and in what manner they were received. When Count Kaunitz was min-

[1] Maria Theresa to the Electress of Saxony, October 10, 1763.

ister at Paris he was on friendly terms with Mme. de Pompadour, but after his return to Vienna there seems to have been no correspondence between them, and in 1755 he did not even know her address. He told Starhemberg, if the favorite was selected as the channel for these secret overtures, to present to her a letter in which he politely requested that she would ask the king to designate some person to represent him in the conferences with the Austrian minister.[1] Nearly a year later, when the first treaty of Versailles had been signed, Kaunitz, at the suggestion of his ambassador at Paris, again wrote the favorite, thanking her for her friendly services and desiring that she would continue them.[2] Three years afterwards, the Austrian minister presented Mme. de Pompadour, as a mark of recognition from Maria Theresa, with a magnificent writing-desk, ornamented with precious stones, in a panel of which was a portrait of the empress.[3] Such is the history of the relations between the empress queen and the royal mistress; the letter of the daughter of the Hapsburgs to the concubine of Louis XV., on which so much eloquence has been wasted, was a myth.[4]

[1] This letter is published by Arneth.

[2] Starhemberg to Kaunitz, May 13; Kaunitz to Mme. de Pompadour, June 9, 1756.

[3] The empress decided in 1757 to make a present to Mme. de Pompadour, but for some reason the plan was not carried out until two years later. The desk, with the portrait and jewels, cost in all seventy-seven thousand francs.

[4] In this matter Carlyle improves on the common tradition, and apparently credits some one who said that Maria Theresa wrote Mme. de Pompadour, and addressed her as "Ma très chère sœur." "Ma sœur" was the formula one queen used with another. It is certainly very curious to find a historian who believes that Maria Theresa would have used this expression in

Equally mythical is the tradition that the favorite hated Frederick because he contemptuously refused to have any dealings with her.[1] Any one familiar with Frederick's character might have been sure that this shrewd and cynical ruler would never have incurred

addressing a person who was not a sovereign. "Ma cousine" was the ordinary term in a letter from a sovereign to a lady possessing a certain rank, and these words the older authorities, and those more familiar with the social usages of the last century than Carlyle apparently was, put in the supposed letter.

[1] It is curious to weigh the evidence on the faith of which it has been for a century alleged that Frederick refused to have anything to do with Mme. de Pompadour. Voltaire wrote that Frederick once said in answer to a suggestion of his, "Je ne la connais pas." If Frederick said this, which is by no means certain, it was quite possibly intended as a snub to Voltaire, for the great poet's desire to talk politics instead of literature was always distasteful to the king. Valori in his memoirs, i. 320, says that Knyphausen alone of the foreign ministers did not call on Pompadour, and this was by Frederick's express order. Such a story should have seemed improbable to any one familiar with Frederick's character; it was certainly a case where hearsay witnesses should have been subjected to cross-examination. But the statement of Valori was until very recently accepted without question by historians. At last the facts can be examined, and, instead of finding Valori confirmed, we can read in Frederick's own correspondence repeated instructions to Knyphausen to visit Pompadour and cultivate her favor, and we find similar instructions to every Prussian minister at Paris from the time she became a political power. The matter is not very important; it is the philosophy and not the detail of history which is of value, but to be correct in the philosophy, it is well to be right in the facts. Frederick stated his principles on such matters in a letter to his ambassador at Russia when Catherine II. had just taken a new lover: "Pour ce que régarde le nouveau favori, faites ce que vous pouvez pour gagner son amitié. . . . S'il y a quelque chose en quoi je puisse lui faire plaisir, ne manquez pas de me le marquer, car les premiers qui flattent ces sortes de gens, captirent leur amitié." Frederick to Solms, September 4, 1772.

the animosity of a person of great influence in a kingdom with which he was closely allied, in order to pose as an advocate of pure morals; no man disturbed himself less about such things than Frederick. When Mme. de Châteauroux was Louis's mistress, he wrote her, he sent her his portrait, and he did whatever was requisite for the cause of the Prussian alliance. In time, Mme. de Pompadour succeeded to the power which had been exercised by her predecessor. Frederick never relaxed his watchful attention on the internal politics of every court in Europe, and as the influence of Mme. de Pompadour increased, he endeavored to keep her friendly to himself. We find frequent instructions to his representatives at Paris to cultivate the friendship of the powerful favorite. "It is indifferent to me to whom I address myself," he wrote Chambrier, "provided that it results well. Therefore I leave it to your adroitness and prudence to make as many visits to Mme. de Pompadour as you find of advantage to my interests." "As I see she is all-powerful," he wrote Keith, "I wish you would inform me if there is not some way to gain her for my interests, and what would be the means to reach this result;" and he instructed Knyphausen to say all the polite things possible, to give her the best-turned compliments of which he was capable, "compliments of which I do not limit the terms," he adds, and he even offered to write her a personal letter, if such an advance would not seem extraordinary.[1]

[1] Frederick to Chambrier, March 29, 1751; to Keith, November 28, 1752; to Knyphausen, January 24, 1756, "Compliments dont je ne vous prescris point les termes." Also *Pol. Cor.*, xii. 73, 98: "Je vous recommande encore une chose très necessaire pour mon service, dans ces occasions, de bien flatter

To none of these overtures did the favorite give any encouraging response; she did indeed receive the compliments of the great king with courtesy, and she sent him polite messages, but Frederick's agents advised him that it was useless to try to buy her; while she was greedy, she had money enough from other sources.[1] It was the truth that Mme. de Pompadour had little taste for Frederick, but it was not because he had ever repulsed her advances or neglected to seek her favor. Shrewd as the king was in his diplomacy, he was never able to bridle his tongue in the freedom of social intimacy; when he chatted with his intimates, with wits and philosophers and boon companions, he expressed his views freely on all men and all women, and of almost all he had a bad opinion. "You don't know this damned race," he replied to one who said the inclinations of man were toward good rather than evil. While he despised humanity as a whole, he viewed with special contempt the king

Madame de Pompadour," etc. Frederick to Knyphausen, March 2, 1756. In this letter Frederick says that he has a great repugnance to writing directly to Mme. de Pompadour, but apparently his objections were purely political, "l'enterprise me parait trop grossière." In view of this, it is curious to read in Valori that Knyphausen was the one minister who did not call on Mme. de Pompadour, and this was by Frederick's express order. It is not unlikely that the Prussian king may have said such a thing later, for Frederick was as unconcerned in relating what purported to be the facts of his career, as those who listened were credulous in believing. Indeed, the king must have been sorely tempted to lie, when he found with what simplicity and confidence all the world accepted anything he saw fit to say. So recent a writer as Carlyle indulges in much laudation of his hero for his noble resolve to have nothing to do with the Pompadour.

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, ix. 297 *et pas.*; Knyphausen to Frederick, March 1, 1756.

of France and his mistress, and the empress of Russia and her lovers. The sharp jests and often the very ribald remarks which fell from the royal lips at the supper-table at Sans Souci were sure to be repeated, and they had much to do with the fact that Louis and his favorite bore no love for Frederick, and that Elizabeth of Russia hated him with all the intensity of which her weak nature was capable.

Though Mme. de Pompadour found the compliments of Kaunitz more to her taste than the efforts of the Prussian ambassadors at politeness, this did not advance the combination which Maria Theresa wished to form against Frederick. The plan for coöperation which Starhemberg presented at the little pleasure-house of Babiole was submitted to Louis, and was promptly rejected. Whatever were the private grievances which the French king felt he had against his brother of Prussia, the Prussian alliance was too firmly established as a part of French policy for an indolent monarch and a timid ministry to take the responsibility of overthrowing it. The Austrian ambassador was informed the French could not believe that Frederick was seeking the friendship of England, and he was obliged to report that they would neither join in an attack upon Frederick, nor would they agree to remain quiet if he was attacked by others. The record of the negotiations between Bernis and Starhemberg, and the avowals of all the diplomats who were concerned in them, show that while the French king desired to be on friendly terms with Austria, he would not break the alliance which had so long existed between France and Prussia.[1]

[1] This appears quite as much in the correspondence of Starhemberg with Kaunitz as in the account which Bernis has given

In the mean time, the French had begun to negotiate for a renewal of their treaty with Frederick, and they hoped to obtain from him the promise of more vigorous support than thus far he had been inclined to give. The Prussian king was in no haste to commit himself to any definite policy; though he was not ready to break with France, he would not say what part he would take in the war now beginning. In June, 1755, the French minister suggested an extension of the treaty expiring in the following year, but Podewils said that it was not yet time to consider the matter. "You have done right," his master told him, "not to hasten the question; let them come and see us."[1]

Almost at the same time that Kaunitz sent to Paris the proposition for a new combination, of which one condition was that France should abandon the Prussian alliance, the intimation was made to Frederick, through the Duke of Brunswick, that the English were ready to discuss with him a defensive treaty, by which he should agree to protect Hanover against any invasion.[2] This suggestion at once impressed Frederick favorably; he had long inclined to the belief that

of the negotiations, t. i. 222–246. "So unbestimmt auch die Antwort des Königs von Frankreich geholten sein mochte," says Arneth, "in einem Punkte war sie doch deutlich und klar, in der Weigerung zu irgend einem feindseligen Schritte gegen Preussen die Hand zu bitten, oder einen solchen auch nur stillschweigend zuzulassen" (iii. 399). Ranke, the eminent Prussian historian, says also: "Nur darüber konnte sich Niemand taüschen, das Frankreich, wenn es gleich mit Oesterreich gut zu stehen wünschte, doch übrigens entschlossen war in dem bevorstehenden Kriege bei seinem bisherigen System, namentlich der Allianz mit Preussen zu behauen." *Der Ursprung des siebenjährigen Krieges*, 64.

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xi. 170.

[2] *Ib.*, 272.

in the English people he could find the most faithful and the most serviceable allies; he did not love his uncle George, but he knew that in this alliance he would be dealing, not with the king but with the people. As to the fate of Hanover he was profoundly indifferent. "They expect me to find my glory in preserving their province of Hanover, which does not concern me the least in the world," he wrote.[1] Still he was willing to do this, if in return he could count upon the assistance and the money of England should he become involved in a Continental war.

He knew, indeed, that the guarantee of Hanover was intended against France and in view of the impending war; he knew that the French intended to attack that province, and he had himself advised them to do so; he knew they had not taken any steps to abandon their long-established alliance with Prussia. "They ask me," he said, "to abandon allies of whom I have no complaint to make."[2] But while he knew that the French would be irritated, he did not think this irritation would lead them to active hostilities; a ministry which had allowed the English to insult their flag and capture their ships was not apt to declare war on Prussia because her king had seen fit to make a defensive alliance with England.[3] He had been unsuccessful in his endeavors to incite them to an active policy; if he had any thought of embroiling Europe, with France as an ally, he was discouraged by the apathy and the inefficiency of that government.[4]

[1] Frederick to the Duke of Brunswick, September 1, October 13, 1755.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, xi. 333, 335.

[3] *Ib.*, xii. 68 *et pas.*

[4] Luckwaldt argues from Frederick's correspondence that he was more desirous of complications than of peace, and that he

On the other hand, he now broke up the possible combination of Austria, England, and Russia against himself, of which he had always been in fear; not only did he alienate Austria from England, for he knew Maria Theresa would never forgive this alliance with her bitterest enemy, but the English had practically concluded a treaty with Russia by which the Empress Elizabeth agreed to furnish them with fifty thousand troops; if Elizabeth became the pensioner of England, she could not attack England's ally; France would do no more than grumble, and Austria alone he did not fear. The contempt which he felt for the French king and his mistress doubtless had an effect on his determination to quit their alliance. So poorly did he think of the resources of his former ally that when his ambassador at Paris wrote that France was better equipped than England for a new war, Frederick abused him unmercifully for his opinion. "Your report," he replied, "has shocked me by your pitiable reasonings as to the relative position of France and England. . . . I have never received from any of my ministers a report so frivolous and unimportant as yours, filled with falsities and the ridiculous gasconades of a young man without stability and without experience." But when later the ambassador, now better advised as to his master's views, reported that the king of France was plunged in dissipation, that his ministers were ignorant, and no one could feel any confidence in their action, Frederick

abandoned France as an ally because her timidity would not second his ambition. It is certain that Frederick coveted Bohemia and Saxony quite as much as Maria Theresa her lost Silesia, and that he contemplated the possibility of their conquest.

thanked him for the just reasoning and sound reflections of his dispatch.[1]

The negotiations between Frederick and the English proceeded slowly. They were not certain of his good faith, and he was distrustful of every one. In the mean time the French had chosen the Duke of Nivernais as ambassador extraordinary, to visit Berlin and negotiate for a further treaty between France and Prussia. The duke was a very great nobleman, his retinue, his plate, and his carriages had to be prepared with a splendor that should correspond to his rank, and this required time; still, he would ultimately reach his destination, and it would then be impossible for Frederick to continue his negotiations with England undetected. Accordingly, he bade his representative in London to say that some conclusion must be reached before Nivernais arrived. This suggestion had its effect: minor difficulties were arranged, the English consented to pay for the Prussian vessels they had captured, and for which indemnity had long been asked in vain, and on January 16, 1756, the treaty of Westminster was signed, by which the contracting parties agreed to oppose the entry of any foreign troops into Germany. Thus Prussia and England became allies months before France and Austria abandoned their ancient rivalry and agreed to act together in the affairs of Europe. George II. could now rely on Prussian armies to repel any invasion of Hanover, and if the French attempted hostili-

[1] Knyphausen to Frederick, April 7, 1755, January 21, 1756; Frederick to Knyphausen, April 19, 1755, July 3, 1756. In a letter of November 8, Frederick speaks of the misery of the people in the French provinces and the poor condition of their navy. *Pol. Cor.*, xi. 373.

ties on land in the war now beginning, they would be confronted by the veteran soldiers of their former ally.

Frederick felt a satisfaction at the conclusion of this treaty which the future showed was unjustified; and for a while he thought that he had now nothing to fear. Even before it was signed, the king had stated with confidence that Austria had no thought of disturbing the peace of Europe;[1] now she might find herself without an ally if she were herself attacked. No sooner had the terms of the treaty of Westminster been agreed upon than Frederick expressed his contentment to his minister at Vienna. "For the present, I can look with the greatest indifference on the plottings of my enemies; if the English system remains unchanged, I have no apprehension from any one else."[2] "As I hold the one who holds the purse strings," he wrote later, "I have nothing to fear from Vienna or St. Petersburg; their ill will can only become effective when they receive pecuniary aid from others."[3] As for the French, Frederick was confident that the irritation caused by his treaty with England would soon subside, and that under no circumstances would they enter an offensive alliance against him.[4] His optimism was not justified, and the treaty of Westminster cemented the alliance that Maria Theresa had so long sought to form between the Houses of Austria and Bourbon.

In January, 1756, the Duke of Nivernais reached Berlin. The ambassador chosen for this important

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xi. 417; December 6, 1755.
[2] Frederick to Klinggraeffen, December 27, 1755.
[3] *Pol. Cor.*, xii. 120, February 26, 1756.
[4] *Ib.*, 68, 215; Frederick to Klinggraeffen, March 25, 1756.

mission, at so critical a period, was a person of much distinction; he was a grand-nephew of Cardinal Mazarin; he had been minister at Rome; he was a member of the French Academy, and he was one of the actors in the little theatre where the favorite displayed her grace and her charms. But under the circumstances, the appearance of so distinguished a negotiator at Frederick's court seemed almost ridiculous. By his instructions, he was not only to secure a renewal of the treaty of 1741, but to obtain Frederick's assistance for the invasion of Hanover.[1] Hardly had he presented his compliments and begun the discussion of his mission, when Frederick produced the treaty by which he had bound himself to England and agreed to send his armies to repel the French if they attempted an invasion.[2] It was in Hanover that the French had expected to make a diversion which might offset the inferiority of their marine; if the Union Jack was triumphant on the sea, the French ministers flattered themselves that when George II. heard that French armies were devastating his favorite province, he would do his utmost to induce his English subjects to offer

[1] Instructions to Nivernais, *Aff. Etr.* Frederick stated in his memoirs that Nivernais offered him the island of Tabago for his aid, and he replied that they must choose some other person as governor of the island of Barataria. *Mém.*, i. 414. This is an account of what did not occur, and the Duc de Broglie has given an ingenious explanation of the matter. A letter from Knyphausen led Frederick to expect the offer, and he prepared his reply. It was not made. Nivernais's instructions and official correspondence prove this, but, unwilling to waste so neat a repartee, Frederick put it in his memoirs when he prepared them long afterwards.

[2] Nivernais to Rouillé, January, 1756; *Aff. Etr.*, Frederick to Knyphausen, January 24, 1756.

reasonable terms of peace; this sudden change in Frederick's position left them no alternative but a maritime war, in which they would probably have the worst of it, or a war on land, in which they must contend with Prussia as well as with England. The news of Frederick's alliance with the enemy of France was as distasteful as it was unexpected; it changed all plans for the prosecution of the war against England, and it altered the political system of Europe.

Frederick endeavored to allay an irritation which proved more acute than he had anticipated. He said truly that his treaty with France was about to expire, and he was at liberty to ally himself with whom he pleased; he endeavored to persuade Nivernais that the convention with England would prove beneficial to France, and would keep away the Russian mercenaries who would have entered Germany in England's pay; if he were in the French king's place, he continued, he would make other plans: he would land eight thousand soldiers in Ireland, and twice that number in England; and to such efforts Prussia would make no opposition, for her guarantee was of Hanover only; as for his defensive treaty with France, he was ready to renew it.[1]

These suggestions met with no favor; the French ministers regarded an invasion of England as impracticable, and in the present condition of affairs they saw no advantage in renewing the treaty of 1741; it did not seem worth while to agree to protect Silesia, which was in constant danger of invasion, in order to

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xii. 49–51, 56, etc.; Nivernais to Rouillé, January 15, 1756; Ranke, *Der Ursprung des siebenjährigen Krieges*, 98.

obtain the promise of Frederick's assistance if the English invaded France; it was not in the French possessions in Europe, but out of Europe, that the English would make their attack.

The news that Frederick had made a treaty with England increased the zeal of those who were already inclined to friendly relations with Austria; the king of Prussia, it was said, had again demonstrated his bad faith and his selfishness; twice before he had deserted the French alliance; now, just as France was to engage in war, Frederick for the third time found his advantage in dealing with her enemies, and protected England from danger in the one spot where she was vulnerable. There was a special bitterness for the French ministers in the intelligence of this alliance; these negotiations, they complained, had been carried on with the secrecy that was habitual with Frederick; while they were imparting to him all their plans, suggesting projects for a joint attack of Hanover, conferring on the basis of intimate allies, he was secretly making terms with their enemies; he listened to their schemes for an invasion of Hanover, while he was stealthily preparing a treaty by which he agreed to stop any such invasion.

After Louis's refusal to break with Frederick, the negotiations between Starhemberg and Bernis had progressed languidly; abandoning their great schemes for an alliance against Prussia, the Austrians sought only some agreement that might save the Low Countries from becoming the scene of a future war.[1] But when the treaty of Westminster was made public, the aspect of affairs at once changed. That treaty, said Kaunitz, promoted the welfare of the House of Austria,

[1] Correspondence of Starhemberg and Kaunitz, 1755.

and certainly it prepared the way for the alliance he so greatly desired. "Now surely," said the minister, "the king of France will renounce the faithless ally who has once more deserted him, and seek the trusty friendship of Maria Theresa." Such suggestions were no longer repelled; if the French were not ready to join in an attack on the Prussian king, they were willing to leave him to his fate. Hardly had the news of the treaty of Westminster reached Paris, when Bernis asked Starhemberg whether Austria was ready to abandon the alliance of England if France would renounce that of Prussia.[1]

The new combination was now viewed with equal favor by both parties, and in May, 1756, four months after the treaty of Westminster was signed between England and Prussia, the Houses of Hapsburg and Bourbon, for the first time in centuries, found themselves united for joint action. It was a proof of the position which Frederick in so few years had gained for Prussia, that his own change of front altered the political system of Europe.

The treaty of May, 1756, is known as the first treaty of Versailles.[2] By its terms France and Austria bound themselves to perpetual amity; should either be attacked by any enemy, the other promised to come to its aid with twenty-four thousand men, though from this agreement the war then existing between France and England was excepted.[3] Louis refused to join in any hostile alliance against Prussia, not

[1] Starhemberg to Kaunitz, February 20, 1756.

[2] It was signed at Jouy, but was known as the treaty of Versailles.

[3] The treaty is found in *Cor. d'Autriche*, t. 255, 245, *et seq. Arch. Aff. Etr.*

indeed because he was now anxious to save Frederick, but because he would not involve France in such a struggle. It was purely a defensive treaty: Austria agreed to give no assistance to England in the war which had begun; France promised not to invade the Low Countries, or any other of the possessions of Maria Theresa.

Maria Theresa had at last succeeded in establishing relations of friendship, and even of intimacy, between herself and the court of France, though she could not obtain any promise of aid in her projects for the recovery of Silesia, and the humiliation of Frederick II. Such a treaty was not all that she desired, but still she was greatly pleased. "Never," said the queen, "during all my reign, have I signed a treaty with so cheerful a heart." [1] Even if Louis would not join in a crusade against Frederick, she felt that with France neutral and Russia for an ally, there was at least a prospect of the revenge she had so long desired. Moreover, if war once began, France in time might be induced to take some part in the contest. Mme. de Pompadour was now wholly enlisted in the Austrian cause; she regarded the new alliance as her own work, and was enchanted at the successful conclusion of the treaty. Heretofore she had confined her energies to the intrigues of the court, to obtaining favors for herself and her protégés; the thought that she was now engaged in forming combinations which might change the face of Europe was agreeable to her vanity; it excited her to take an active part in the events which followed, to control the conduct of a war for which she was in large part responsible, and unfortunately she dealt with questions which affected

[1] Arneth, iv. 450.

the welfare of France and the destinies of Europe with no more profound reflection than when she asked a pension for a friend, or decided on the style of a porcelain pot.[1]

Before the first treaty with Austria was signed, the war between France and England formally began. The French ministers were long-suffering, but when English cruisers for almost a year had been engaged in capturing French ships, and hostilities were waging both in the East and the West, it was evident that the conflict could not be averted. In the spring of 1756, active preparations were made for an expedition of which the destination was kept secret. The English were apprehensive that an invasion of their country was contemplated, and troops were hastily summoned from Hanover and Hesse to repel the enemy, but the French had chosen a place for attack where the prospects of success were better.

In the war of the Spanish Succession the island of Minorca had been captured by the English for their ally, the Archduke Charles, and when the Austrian prince was obliged to abandon his hopes of the Spanish crown, they held it for themselves. The island was small, with a population of less than thirty thousand, and would have been of little importance, had it not been for its harbor. "June, July, August, and Port Mahon are the four best harbors of the Mediterranean," was a familiar couplet attributed to Andrea Doria, and it expressed the opinion of navigators on that sea. Port Mahon was now selected as the place of attack, and the command of the expedition was given to Marshal Richelieu.

[1] "Mme. de Pompadour, qui royait en enfant les affaires de l'état." *Mém. de Bernis*, ii. 45.

In April the fleet set sail with twelve thousand men and almost two hundred transports, so great was the number of boats required to carry not only the soldiers, but the provisions, the camp implements, the camp followers, the luxuries of the officers, and all that made the baggage train of a French army unwieldy in a campaign. On April 17 they landed without opposition and marched towards Port Mahon. War had not yet been declared between the two countries, and the English commander sent a communication to Richelieu asking with what intent he had landed on the island. The marshal replied with the ready wit which gained for him among his contemporaries, as with posterity, a reputation little justified by his abilities or his character. "I can assure your excellency," he wrote, "that our purpose is exactly the same as that of the fleet of his Britannic Majesty in reference to French ships."

The object of the French expedition at last became known at London, in April Admiral Byng set sail for the relief of Minorca, and on the 20th of May his fleet reached the entrance of the harbor.

The French naval forces were under the command of La Galissonière, an officer of experience and skill, and to him was due one of the few victories at sea which the French won during this war. Yet he was burdened with instructions that might have excused him if he had displayed less energy than his ill-fated opponent. The inferiority of the French marine had induced a timidity that is as disastrous on sea as on land, and La Galissonière's orders were a type of those that cramped many a gallant and skillful French commander. "You will see that it is my wish," so ran the royal instruction, "that you occupy yourself

chiefly with the preservation of my squadron and of the troops destined for this expedition." "It is the intention of his majesty," added the minister, "that his squadron and troops shall not be exposed to forces that are superior in numbers. This is a point which his majesty prescribes absolutely, and by which the Marquis of La Galissonière must regulate all his manœuvres. . . . Should he be attacked by an English squadron of superior force, he must take the promptest measures to get himself in safety." [1]

It was with no such timid orders that the English admiral came to the rescue of his countrymen. The opposing forces were about equal; Byng had thirteen men-of-war and La Galissonière twelve, and on the afternoon of May 20 the engagement began. It continued till night, and though neither side gained an important advantage, the French fleet held their ground, and the English at last abandoned the attack. The losses in men had not been serious, — about two hundred on either side; the English ships had suffered somewhat, but they were not disabled. If Byng, like his adversary, had been instructed by his government that the object was not to beat the enemy, but to save his ships, he might well have decided on a retreat, but such was not the spirit with which the English gained victories on every sea. Byng, however, decided that it was useless to make any further effort for the relief of Port Mahon, and returned to Gibraltar. He was court-martialed and shot on the quarter-deck for failing to do his utmost to secure victory. The sentence was severe, and yet that he failed to do his utmost is certain; such was the condition of the French fleet

[1] Instructions pour le Marquis de la Galissonière, *Arch. de la Marine.*

at the close of the day's fighting that a more determined man could have renewed the engagement with at least a fair prospect of success.[1]

The retreat of Byng settled the fate of the English garrison, and the attack was carried on by Richelieu with vigor and daring. The service in the trenches was painful and perilous, but Richelieu followed the traditions of the French army and declared the post of danger a privilege. His soldiers drank too much of strong Spanish wine, and under the hot sun of Minorca this caused drunkenness and sickness. "Any soldier found drunk," said the general order, "shall not be allowed to serve in the trenches." An appeal to honor was more efficacious than threats of imprisonment and flogging; drunkenness decreased; soldiers as well as officers craved the privilege of working in the places most exposed to bullets. On the night of June 27, it was resolved to make an endeavor to storm the place; the fortress was a strong one, but the enthusiasm of the soldiers carried all before them. The attack began at ten, and by five in the morning, when firing ceased in order to remove the dead and wounded, a large part of the defenses were in the possession of the French. Nothing remained for the English commander but to capitulate, and Minorca passed into the possession of the French. It was the first victory in the war with England, and it was to prove one of the last; it excited equal enthusiasm in France and indignation in England. Richelieu returned to Paris, where his achievements were celebrated in odes and lyrics and songs, by Voltaire and

[1] Accounts of this battle from the French standpoint are numerous. Among English writers, perhaps the clearest account is given by Captain Mahan.

poets of less degree; a volume was filled with the poems, the songs, and an account of the fêtes which celebrated the capture of Port Mahon.[1]

[1] *Receuil général des pièces, chansons et fêtes données à l'occasion de la prise du Port Mahon*, 1757. For the siege, see *Mémoires rélatifs à l'expedition de Minorque, Correspondance de Richelieu, Mém. de Rochambeau, Mém. de Bernis*, etc.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE COMBINATION AGAINST FREDERICK.

FREDERICK was at once informed of the contents of the treaty of Versailles, but he did not regard it as a measure which would necessarily be dangerous.[1] Any vigorous steps against himself, he wrote, would be little in keeping with the timid and variable counsels of the French ministry. Knyphausen saw more clearly the irritation produced at Paris by Frederick's alliance with the English, and the lengths to which this feeling might go. The convention with England, he wrote, "has created here a feeling of distrust, of bitterness which will long endure, and which it may be impossible entirely to destroy. Certainly this event and no other motive has determined the French court to ally itself as closely as it has done with the court of Vienna."[2] "Confidence in your majesty," wrote the plain-spoken ambassador, "has been entirely destroyed by the convention of neutrality between you and England. The small regard which they accuse you of showing towards France on this occasion, and the moment you chose for this step, have alienated

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xii. 408, 414, *et pas.*

[2] Frederick to Knyphausen, March 16, 1756. Knyphausen to Frederick, June 21, 1756: "Il est certain que c'est uniquement cet événement [le convention de neutralité avec l'Angleterre] et nul autre motif qui a détermine la cour de France à se lier si étroitement qu'elle vient de faire avec celle de Vienne." This is stated still more emphatically in a later dispatch of July 2. *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 61.

the ministry and the whole nation." It was certain, he added, that had it not been for the treaty of Westminster, the alliance with Austria, which had been rejected in 1751, and several times since then, would never have been effected.

Frederick's feeling of security was dispelled by rumors of negotiations in the quarter where he most feared danger. By his alliance with England the king hoped to be protected against the animosity which he knew Elizabeth bore to him, and he constantly sought to impress on the English ministers the importance of holding Russia firmly in their alliance.[1]

With an optimism that seems to have been excessive, Frederick was assured that the relations with Russia were entirely satisfactory, but in truth the treaty by which England was to be furnished with Russian mercenaries had come to nothing. The czarina was greatly annoyed when she found that her new allies had made a convention with the Prussian king; instead of that, she said, she had hoped some plan would be suggested for reducing his power, and for that she would be at all times ready.[2] In form she ratified the agreement to send troops for the defense of Hanover, but she added a condition which rendered it of no importance: it was to apply only in case of an invasion by the king of Prussia. Such a danger might have been apprehended when the negotiations began, but now Frederick was England's ally, it was not against him, but in concert with him, that the Russians must act. Not until July was Frederick informed of the qualification that Elizabeth had added

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xii. 110 *et pas.*

[2] *Ib.*, 236, 7, etc.; Williams to Holderness, February, 1756.

to her treaty, and, as he justly said, it rendered it wholly useless.[1]

The animosity of the czarina towards Frederick was in large part due to the bitter and obscene jests which no sense of prudence could keep him from uttering at the expense of other European sovereigns; it needed a sword as sharp as that of Frederick to protect him from the animosities excited by the sharpness of his tongue. If the czarina's hostility was due to a trivial cause, she held to it with a tenacity unusual in her weak and capricious character. So far back as 1746, a treaty had been executed between Austria and Russia, and by a secret article it was provided that in case Frederick violated the terms of the peace of Dresden, the two powers should then unite and wrest from him Silesia and Glatz.

This treaty was defensive in its terms, but such were Elizabeth's feelings that it was not difficult to induce her to join in a war upon Frederick without waiting for him to begin. Hostility to Prussia was the settled policy of the Russian court; opposition to any increase in the power of that kingdom, said a cabinet council in 1753, was a maxim of the Russian empire.[2] Maria Theresa felt sure, therefore, of the assistance of Russia whenever she was ready to ask for it.

There is no foundation for the tradition that Fred-

[1] Letters of Williams, Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 308, etc.; Mitchell to Holderness, July 9, 1756.

[2] The authorities for this are found in Arneth, iv. 489, and in *Geheimnisse des Sächsischen Cabinets*. The provision for Frederick's punishment if he again attacked Maria Theresa was in the fourth secret article of the treaty between Russia and Austria, which is published by Vitzthum.

erick was suddenly informed of his enemies' devices, and was saved from an attack that would have found him unprepared, by the fortunate treason of a Saxon employee. Ever since 1752, he had purchased secret information from a Saxon in his pay, and there were no sudden revelations which stirred him to action.

He was equally well informed of the views of the Russian court, and the solemn declaration of 1753 was disclosed to him long before the Seven Years' war.[1] All the more did he attach importance to the English alliance as a means of preventing any attack from his northern neighbor. However much Elizabeth hated him, he did not think she would keep a great army in the field unless some one paid her for it, and if England would no longer furnish funds, Austria was more apt to be seeking subsidies for herself than paying them to others. As late as May, 1756, the king expressed his confidence in the continuance of peace; but when he found that the English treaty with Russia amounted to nothing, and heard of negotiations between Louis and Elizabeth, the idea suggested itself that even if France would not take up arms against him, she might give a subsidy to Russia and place that power in position to do so. The military preparations of Maria Theresa excited his suspicions, and he was suddenly convinced that Austria and Russia had decided to make war upon him. It was not the disclosure of secrets from Dresden that aroused Frederick's suspicions of an alliance forming against him; he knew of the animosity of the czarina; he had long known of the defensive treaties which had been made between Austria

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xi. 439, xii. *pas.*; Frederick to Knyphausen, June 19, 1756.

and Russia and France, and the offensive treaties, the existence of which he afterwards alleged as a justification for taking up arms, did not exist at all. Early in the summer large numbers of Austrian and Russian troops gathered in Bohemia and Livonia; but in July the Russian forces withdrew, and Frederick was assured that this year he was in no danger of attack.[1]

A very few days later, he decided himself to begin the war which he believed to be inevitable by invading Saxony, and from there pushing on to attack the Austrians in Bohemia.[2] It was in vain that the faithful Podewils dwelt upon the dangers in which the king would involve himself by acting as the aggressor; he would compel France and Russia to come to Austria's aid, and while his first success would doubtless be brilliant, the day might come when he would remember the prudent warnings of his counselor. "All this," adds Podewils, "was entirely thrown away and regarded as a result of too great timidity, and at last I was somewhat curtly dismissed with the remark, 'Adieu, Monsieur of the timid policy.'"[3]

A condition of suspense was unendurable to Frederick, and the advantages which might result from the initiative appealed to him strongly; it had always been his military policy to make the first move; twice had he begun hostilities by a sudden and unannounced attack, and had ultimately been successful; rather than wait in the hope that the combinations of his

[1] Frederick to Klinggraeffen, July 10, 1756.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 105, under date of July 22.

[3] Podewils to Eichel, July 22, 1756. This is a very curious letter. "Ich sehe," he adds, "dass alle vorstellungen, wenigstens bis dato, ganz fruchtlos und vergeblich sein, und mehr irritiren als adouciren."

enemies might fail, he preferred to make a bold assault which perhaps might shatter them. In France, the government was timid, and it was controlled by a frivolous woman; in Russia, the government was corrupt, and it was controlled by an indolent and a capricious woman; if he were successful in his attack upon Austria, neither of her allies might care to come to her aid.[1] At the same time Frederick did not wish to appear as the aggressor; his conduct in the past had obtained for him the reputation of an unscrupulous ruler, who gave no heed to the terms of treaties or to the requirements of good faith; he felt the importance of public opinion in such a struggle as was now to begin, he required the hearty support of England, and he wished to do nothing that might repel it.

Accordingly on July 18, he directed his minister at Vienna to demand of Maria Theresa an explanation of her conduct in stationing troops in Bohemia, and to ask whether she intended to attack Prussia.[2]

The empress's reply was brief; it was to the effect that in view of the present situation she had decided upon such steps as were required for her own safety and that of her allies, and this, she added, could injure no one. The answer was not satisfactory, and Frederick at once dispatched a second letter, in which he alleged that Austria and Russia had agreed to join in an attack on him in the following spring, and demanded of the empress a formal agreement that for the space of two years she would not make war upon

[1] The change in Frederick's views as to the political situation, his sudden decision that war was imminent, and his still more sudden decision to begin it himself, can be followed in his correspondence for this period. *Pol. Cor.*, t. xii., xiii.

[2] Frederick to Klinggraeffen, July 18.

Prussia. He intimated also, in plain terms, that her word would not be taken; either she must give a declaration to this effect in writing, or she must announce it publicly in presence of the ambassadors of England and France. "I want a categorical answer," added the king, "and not in the style of an oracle."[1]

It is not possible that Frederick for one moment expected such a declaration would be given, and, while nominally waiting for the answer, he diligently continued his preparations for war. He knew Maria Theresa too well to believe that, at the dictation of a man she hated, she would bind herself not to go to war against him. The demand was an extraordinary one, and it was made upon the proudest of European sovereigns. If the matter was unusual, the form was still more offensive; the ambassador was to inform the empress that her word could not be believed, and to demand of the daughter of the Cæsars that she should humiliate herself by making an agreement to keep the peace in the presence of foreign ministers. It was easy to predict the reply the empress would give to such a demand, when made by her bitterest enemy.[2]

The threat of war if her answer was unsatisfactory had no terrors for Maria Theresa; she had no offensive alliance with Russia or France, but both had promised to come to her assistance if she were attacked; she wished for war, she did not fear it.[3]

[1] Frederick to Klinggraeffen, August 2, 1756.

[2] "Jamais," said Kaunitz, speaking of Frederick's demand, "on n'a vu un écrit plus impertinent et plus indecent de la part d'un Prince." Ratté to Rouillé, August 22, *Aff. Etr.*

[3] See dispatch to the English minister, August 22, 1756. "Je suis persuadé que, dans le fond de l'ame, on ne seroit pas faché

Accustomed alike to observe and to receive the respect which sovereigns owed one another, her answer ran, she had seen with astonishment the contents of the paper submitted by the Prussian ambassador; Austria and Russia had made no agreement to attack Prussia, and the reports of such a combination were false, but in view of the preparation for war which the king of Prussia himself had long been making, she must claim a monarch's right to take such measures as she saw fit to protect herself and her allies.[1]

Frederick's preparations were made, and an army of sixty-five thousand men had gathered by the Prussian frontier ready for an immediate advance. On the night of August 25, he received Maria Theresa's answer; at five in the morning of August 28, he bade farewell to the English minister, mounted his horse, and rode away at the head of his troops. On the next day they crossed the Saxon frontier and the Seven Years' war began.[2] "All that is left for me to do," he said, "is to cut the Gordian knot with the sword."[3]

Just before Frederick entered Saxony, he requested of the elector permission for his armies to pass through

de voir le Roy de Prusse commencer les hostilités," Aubeterre, the French ambassador at Vienna, wrote Rouillé, July 7, 1756, *Aff. Etr.*

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 285–291. No offensive alliance had been signed between Austria and Russia at this time, though it has been repeatedly stated by writers, from Frederick down, that such a treaty existed. But it is certain that both Elizabeth and Maria Theresa were ready to attack Frederick, whenever they saw their opportunity.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 309.

[3] Mitchell, August 17 and 28, 1756.

that country on their way to Bohemia.[1] The request was probably made with little desire for its acceptance, but Augustus promptly consented to the passage of the Prussian army.[2] He soon found that this would not end his troubles, and a correspondence followed which is both pathetic and amusing, as it gradually dawned upon the timorous king that his unscrupulous neighbor intended not to pass through Saxony, but to conquer it. Frederick thought it not unlikely that he could drive the faint-hearted Augustus into being his ally. "Saxony," he said, "must share the same fortune and the same dangers as my own states. If I am fortunate, the king of Poland shall be amply compensated. I shall take charge of his interests as well as my own. As for what people will say, we will embellish our treaty with pretty things, and besides, his best excuse is that he is unable to do anything else."[3] There was a bitter truth in this, but the real situation had not yet dawned upon Augustus. He had kept, so Frederick told him, a foolish adviser and must suffer from the results, and the only assurance he received, in answer to his terrified demands of what the Prussian king really did want, was an assurance that personally he should be treated politely.[4]

When Frederick first asked permission for his army to pass through, he said that, if the request were granted, exact order and discipline should be preserved. The demand was perhaps made to facilitate

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 279.

[2] Augustus to Frederick, August 29, 1756.

[3] *Geheimnisse*, ii. 95; also Frederick to Augustus, September 13, 1756.

[4] The correspondence between Frederick and Augustus is found in *Pol. Cor.*, t. xiii.

Frederick's progress, and certainly it was with no intention of making an orderly march through Saxony and then leaving the country in peace. Frederick had decided to hold the electorate as a conquered province; at the same time that he forwarded his demand to Dresden, he calculated with his own officials the amount of the contributions which Saxony must furnish during the entire continuance of the war which he was about to begin. The king of Poland, he said, had received from Saxony a revenue of six million thalers, but he would be content with five millions, and to that extent the people of the electorate would be benefited by a change of masters.[1] Each concession that Augustus made was followed by a new demand from Frederick, and at last the unfortunate elector was told that he must either declare war on Maria Theresa, or Frederick would seize his army and himself lead it against the empress. It was in vain that Augustus protested that he was at peace with Maria Theresa, as he was with Frederick, and that he had no wish to go to war with either of them. "Good God," cried the Saxon envoy as he heard these demands, "such a thing is without example in ancient or modern history." "Do you think so?" replied Frederick. "It seems to me there is a precedent, but if not, perhaps you know I flatter myself on being original. . . . Give your king my compliments, tell him my ultimatum, and say that if he sends me an archangel, I shan't change it."[2] Augustus offered repeatedly to observe the most exact neutrality during the war, to furnish free passage through his states for the Prussian army, and to give guarantees for his

[1] An den Etats minister von Borcke, August, 1756.

[2] *Geheimnisse des Sächsischen Cabinets*, ii. 94–100.

agreement. These offers were refused, and at last Augustus declared he could go no further, and refused to allow his army to be consolidated with that of Prussia. Frederick wasted no more time in negotiations, which had been only a farce from the beginning. He marched to Dresden, seized the revenues of the country, incorporated the Saxon troops with his own, and from that time the electorate was administered in all respects as any other of Frederick's dominions, except with much greater severity. The city of Leipsic alone paid in contributions over ten million thalers during the Seven Years' war, and the contributions from the whole electorate were more than Frederick obtained from his own kingdom.[1] Saxony was conquered with as much expedition as Silesia, and with as few formalities.

The Saxons in their distress asked Austria to come to the rescue, and the Austrian army under Marshal Browne marched to their relief. At Lobositz he encountered Frederick's army, and an obstinate engagement resulted. It was perhaps a drawn battle, for both sides remained on the field, but in its results it was a victory for Frederick. Browne was unable to form a junction with the Saxons, and their army of about seventeen thousand strong remained shut up in Pirna. They endeavored to make their escape, but were driven back; they were now surrounded by forces nearly four times as large as their own, Browne could not relieve them, and on the 15th of October the Saxon army capitulated. Practically the entire force was consolidated with the Prussian army; the officers unwilling

[1] *Geheimnisse*, i. 424, 5. The exact amount paid by Leipsic was 10,726,429 thalers, besides the amounts contributed by citizens for lodging and free quarters for the Prussian troops.

to serve under Frederick were allowed to retire, but the common soldiers had no liberty of choice.

It would be difficult to find any legal justification of Frederick's course. Saxony had joined no combination for the dismemberment of Prussia; even the secret article of the treaty of 1746 between Austria and Russia, by which it was provided that if Frederick violated the peace of Dresden, Silesia should be taken from him, had never been accepted by the electorate; so far as formal diplomatic relations were concerned, the two countries were at peace, and no treaties had been entered into by Saxony, either public or secret, which justified an attack upon her.[1] The documents contained in the Saxon state office at Dresden were seized, and an elaborate justification of Frederick's conduct was based upon them. It convinced many people that an agreement had been formed for the destruction of Prussia, to which Saxony was a party, and it has been received until recent times with very little question as proving that fact. It was for this end that it was issued, and to produce such an impression the documents were garbled and confused as necessity required. "It is not merely an extract of the papers found in the Saxon archives that I desire," Frederick wrote to those who were charged with the work, upbraiding them with their delays, "but an argument, to be submitted to the public, of the unjust and pernicious practices of my enemies, which have forced me to take up arms to get the start of them. That is the end I propose; it is

[1] Frederick stated the motives which led him to seize Saxony, with his usual frankness, in a letter written just before the invasion. *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 293, 4. He would not leave behind him, he said, an enemy who might strike him a fatal blow.

for you to work in order to accomplish it. . . . Work more and consult less." [1] His servants did their best to conform to the orders of a peremptory master. As no treaty for an attack upon Frederick was in existence, and as Saxony was not a party to any treaty hostile to Prussia, none such could be found. "The king of Prussia has not discovered that we had entered any compact against him," wrote Brühl to the Saxon minister at Vienna, "because we have n't," and if Brühl did not always tell the truth, he told it this time.[2]

But in the correspondence that was thus ransacked there were many uncomplimentary remarks about Frederick. The Saxon ministers hated him, and they said so; when it was reported that Russia and Prussia were to become allies, they expressed their regret, and they gave utterance to their pleasure when they heard of measures that might check the power of Prussia and the ambition of the court of Berlin; they stated their belief that Frederick intended to lay hands upon Dantzic and Polish Prussia, and the future justified the belief.[3] Doubtless they would have been glad to see Frederick defeated and humiliated, but if unfriendly remarks about the sovereign of another country are a justification for going to war, it is fortunate that the correspondence of statesmen is not often made public.

These considerations were little regarded by Frederick; when he attacked Saxony, he did not claim that she was a party to any alliances against him, and in the memoir subsequently issued to justify his

[1] Frederick to Podewils and Finckenstein, October 8, 1756.
[2] Brühl to Flemming, September 20, 1756.
[3] Letters of Brühl for 1754, 1755, and 1756, cited by Frederick.

action, very judicious manipulation of the documents was required to make even a pretense of such being the case.[1] But on the other hand, the sympathy of the Saxons was with Austria and not with Prussia; Augustus would indeed have been the most forgiving of men, if he had cherished any feeling for his neighbor except cordial dislike. Frederick returned this dislike, and long before he had refused to join in any treaty with France to which the king of Poland was a party.[2] Brühl, the Saxon chief minister, had an influence over Augustus far exceeding that of Kaunitz over Maria Theresa, and he sympathized with any movement against Prussia, even though he dared not advise his master to join in it. Had Frederick been unsuccessful in his attack upon Austria, there can be little doubt that the Elector of Saxony would have joined the alliance against him. Frederick resolved that so long as the war against Maria Theresa lasted, Saxony should be a part of Prussia; whether Saxon sympathies were Austrian or Prussian, the Saxon contributions should go into the Prussian war chest, and the Saxon soldiers should fight in the Prussian army. The invasion and seizure of Saxony was certainly a very unscrupulous and probably a very sagacious act.

There is still the further question whether war would have been declared upon Frederick, if he had not himself begun it. When he invaded Saxony, there was no treaty in existence for war against

[1] See Vitzthum's *Geheimnisse des Sächsischen Cabinets*, in which are contained all the documents bearing on the diplomatic position of Saxony, when Frederick invaded that country.

[2] Frederick to Knyphausen, September 1, 1755. "Il n'est que trop avéré que sont des fripons que les Saxons qui crient plus que tout autre contre moi," he wrote in July, 1756.

Prussia, and the statement so often made, that the conquest and partition of that kingdom had been solemnly agreed upon, is a fable.

By the treaty of May 1, France had promised to furnish Austria twenty-four thousand men, if she was attacked by any one; by a treaty made ten years before, Russia had agreed that if Frederick began war on Austria, she would come to her aid, and would not lay down arms until Silesia had been reconquered; Saxony had agreed to nothing. Frederick was aware of the exact terms of all these treaties.[1] He asserted, indeed, that Russia and Austria had made a further and an offensive alliance against him; this was not the case, and it is hard to say whether Frederick believed that it was. In view of these treaties, the English advised caution on Frederick's part, for by taking the offensive he would give Austria the right to demand from France and Russia the aid they had promised, and for the same reason Maria Theresa was willing and probably anxious to be attacked.[2] But though no formal treaty for an attack upon Prussia had been made, Frederick believed that war was inevitable, and no man in Europe was more apt to be correct in his judgment of the future. No concealment was made of Maria Theresa's desire for revenge, and, considering the feelings of the czarina, there is little doubt that she would have turned a defensive treaty

[1] Valori furnished Frederick a copy of the treaty of Versailles (*Mém.* ii. 59 *et seq.*), and when Frederick was making preparation for war he notified him that should Maria Theresa be attacked, France would furnish the assistance provided by the treaty. *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 257; *Mém. de Valori*, ii. 121–124.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 363, *pas.*; Holderness to Mitchell, August 6 and 10, 1756; Keith to Holderness, July 14; Raumer, ii. 376, 7.

into an offensive alliance whenever she was asked. What France would have done is more uncertain. Louis had no love for Frederick, but his dislikes were as torpid as his character. Just before the invasion of Saxony, the Austrian ambassador wrote that Louis would not take part in a war upon Prussia. His confidential adviser said afterwards that Louis never intended to attack Frederick unless the Prussian king violated the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, and from this position no arguments could make him recede.[1]

The chapter of accidents might also have operated in Frederick's favor and prevented an outbreak of hostilities. Though Maria Theresa was eager for war, she would not begin it alone; Louis and his advisers were timid, and it is doubtful if they could have been induced to start the contest; Elizabeth hated Frederick, but she was a weak and a capricious woman, and her health was greatly impaired. She had, wrote the English ambassador, short breath, a bad cough, swollen legs, and water on the chest, besides other maladies, yet all these infirmities did not prevent her from dancing minuets with him, and from indulging in dissipations more harmful than this.[2] Her policy was as uncertain as her health; her ill will towards Frederick found frequent and violent utterance, but the storms of passion did not last long, and it was with difficulty that she could settle upon any plan of action; reduced by weakness and infirm of purpose, what she most craved was tranquillity.[3]

[1] Starhemberg to Kaunitz, July 18, 1756; *Mém. de Bernis*, i. 271, 8.

[2] Report of October, 1755, and February, 1756, cited in Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii. 295, 313.

[3] Williams, April 11, 1756.

It is not certain that the prospect of war was altogether disagreeable to Frederick. He had long sought to rouse the French ministers to a vigorous policy, and ill will at their supineness and timidity had much to do with inclining him towards the English alliance. His correspondence shows an earnest resolve to isolate both Saxony and Austria. He refused to sign any treaty with France, if Saxony was to be included as a party. He derived great satisfaction from the belief that by the treaty of Westminster, Austria would be deprived of the assistance of England and Russia. There can be no doubt that Frederick regarded portions of Bohemia and Saxony as gains of great value to Prussia; he hankered for them as Maria Theresa did for Silesia, and he did not despair of their acquisition. He did not wish for war, if he was to meet Austria, Russia, and France combined, but if he had only to encounter Austria and Saxony, Frederick did not contemplate such a possibility with apprehension, and there is much reason for thinking that he regarded it with pleasure.[1]

At all events he preferred taking the chance of war, with the advantage which he could gain from the first attack, rather than await an uncertain future. In this he was perhaps wise, and yet if a man like Louvois had been at the head of the French war department, if the affairs of that country had not been managed with a carelessness, a weakness, and a folly which was equaled only when France again went to war with Prussia under Napoleon III., or if the Russian czarina had lived a few years longer, it is probable that

[1] Frederick's real desires can only be gathered from his correspondence. See *Politische Correspondenz* for 1755 and 1756. Also the careful analysis of it by Luckwaldt.

the great combination which Frederick roused against himself would have caused his ruin. But he knew that fortune is wont to favor the bold gamester, whether at the card-table or on the battlefield, and at this time, as when he began his career by the invasion of Silesia, the result justified the chance he took.

He began the war with full confidence of ultimate success. "We have nothing to fear," he wrote his brother just before he entered Saxony. "According to the rules of probabilities we shall escape from these snares with all possible honor."[1] He seems to have felt that probably France would not take up arms against him, and possibly Russia might not do so. "How could I expect," he wrote later, justifying himself for beginning a war that almost proved his destruction, "that the tears of the dauphin, the laments of the queen of Poland, and the lies of the court of Vienna would involve France in a war that was entirely against her political interests? France had no treaty with the king of Poland, and was not bound to come to his aid. Louis XIV. made war on the father-in-law of the Duke of Burgundy. The relations of blood have never influenced the policy of kings."[2]

Frederick's success in the speedy and complete subjugation of Saxony exceeded his expectations. He looked upon the result with much satisfaction, and his only apprehension was over the position which France might assume as a result of the invasion of Saxony. "The first outcry in France over my operations," he wrote, "will be terrible, but I hope the winter and cold weather will calm the French fury."[3]

[1] Frederick to the Prince of Prussia, August 13, 1756.

[2] *Apologie de ma conduite politique.*

[3] Frederick to Finckenstein, September 4, 1756.

The winter came, but it did not produce the cooling effect which Frederick had hoped. As the reports from Saxony reached Paris, they created an increasing indignation; the dauphin had married a daughter of Augustus III., and her laments at the treatment of her parents were not without their influence in fanning the war feeling; her mother wrote describing the indignities which she suffered from Prussian soldiers, and these letters were circulated at the court as proofs of Frederick's wickedness.[1] France, also, as a guarantor of the treaty of Westphalia, was bound to protect Saxony against any attack; treaties in force, it was argued, as well as a feeling of obligation to kinsmen of the dauphin, required that she should espouse the cause of the sovereign who had been so summarily despoiled of his electorate.

Certainly there was no reason why the French should have continued their defensive alliance with Frederick, or wasted lives and money in protecting him from his enemies. The power of Austria was no longer dangerous. Frederick had not been a profitable ally, and to expect that he would exert himself in behalf of France would have shown a poor knowledge of his character. If the alliance with Austria had gone no further than the treaty of May, 1756, it would have been an act showing more political wisdom than was often seen in the councils of Louis XV.; it deprived England of a valuable ally, it saved France from danger of Continental complications; if Maria Theresa and Elizabeth saw fit to join in an attack on Frederick, the French could have watched the conflict with the same philosophical unconcern that the Prussian king showed during the closing years of the war of the Austrian Succession.

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, April and October, 1756.

If Frederick led his army into Bohemia, the treaty of Versailles required France to furnish twenty-four thousand men for the defense of Maria Theresa. Such a measure of friendly aid would have been a slight burden for the French; the friendship of Austria would not have been dearly bought at that price. But it would have been possible to have obtained more than friendship for this assistance. Long before, Kaunitz had offered to cede part of the Austrian Low Countries to Don Philip, if France would renounce the Prussian alliance and leave a free field to Austria and Russia.[1] The power of Frederick, said Kaunitz, threatened the authority of the emperor, the welfare and even the existence of the House of Austria; the loss of the entire Netherlands would be richly paid by the downfall of the Prussian king, and it should be reckoned great gain if by that means Silesia and Glatz could be reconquered.[2]

But in return for the aid promised by the first treaty of Versailles, the French negotiators insisted upon nothing, and got nothing; even in the war against England, Austria promised only neutrality. The mistake became more serious when, by further treaties, France, instead of furnishing moderate aid to her new ally, assumed the chief burden of the war against Frederick. She wasted the resources needed to maintain her position as a colonial power against England, in a Continental war of which Austria was to receive the fruits of victory. To choose Maria Theresa as an ally instead of Frederick was not a political error, but to lend the power of France to satisfy the vengeance of the empress without the certainty, or even the rea-

[1] Arneth, iv. 394, 5.

[2] *Mém. of Kaunitz*, May 23, 1756.

sonable hope, of sufficient reward was an act of folly which involved the country in a ruinous war and a disgraceful peace.

But in the summer of 1756, France had proceeded no further with the new alliance than to promise a certain amount of assistance to Maria Theresa if she were attacked by any enemy. In August, Frederick invaded Saxony, and Maria Theresa demanded of the French the aid for which their treaty called. They were now prepared, not only to furnish this, but to go much further and join in the league against Frederick. Whether the invasion of Saxony was the cause of this change in feeling, or was the pretext for a course toward which Louis was already inclined, he was now ready to wage war upon Prussia and eager to assist in its ruin. No sooner had the news of the invasion reached Paris than Bernis intimated to the Austrian ambassador that the French king was now willing to enter an offensive alliance against Prussia, and to join Maria Theresa in an endeavor to curtail the power and possessions of the Prussian king. It was at last possible to form the league for the overthrow of her rival for which the vindictive queen had so long thirsted, and now that all parties were agreed in a common purpose the negotiations went on prosperously.

All the influences potent at the French court were exerted in favor of taking a vigorous part in a war which it was believed would reduce Frederick II. to the rank of a petty German prince. Louis was thoroughly enlisted in the cause of the new alliance; he had many grievances against the Prussian king: Frederick had been a faithless ally and a sharp critic; Louis was superstitious, and Frederick scoffed at religion; the glory won by his Prussian rival was un-

pleasant to a monarch not altogether insensible to the contempt excited by his own indolent and licentious career; he joined with a good heart in an attack upon a sovereign whom he had long secretly disliked.

There had been much in the treaty with Austria that was to Louis's tastes. Not only had he found a good Catholic as an ally, who neither sneered at him nor at the mass, but the negotiations had been carried on, so to speak, between sovereign and sovereign; Louis had been consulted in person, the matter had not first been submitted to ministers, of whom he always felt a secret jealousy. "An intimate union with Austria," he wrote, "is my work; I believe it wise and I wish to maintain it." [1]

If Louis believed the Austrian alliance to be his creation, the favorite was still more convinced that she was its originator. "Mme. de Pompadour," wrote Starhemberg, speaking of the treaty of May, "is enchanted with what she regards as her own work." [2] The political combinations, in which she played so important a part, turned a brain that was filled with vanity, and she hoped for great results from the new policy which France owed to her influence. A woman at the head of the Austrian government had controlled it with a courage and resolution shown by few men; a woman ruled the destinies of Russia, not wisely indeed, but with untrammeled authority, and Mme. de Pompadour thought she was able to exercise an equal power in France. It was a striking illustration of the condition in which the country had sunk under the weakest of the Bourbons, that in a great crisis the helm of state, which had been

[1] Louis to Broglie, January 22, 1757.

[2] Starhemberg to Kaunitz, May, 1756.

controlled by the genius of a Richelieu and the subtle intellect of a Mazarin, should be in the hands of a frivolous Pompadour; that a woman only fitted to adorn a salon, or delight an audience, should undertake the conduct of a war against William Pitt and Frederick the Great.

Her zeal was fanned by the adroit flattery which the Austrian minister heaped upon her. Count Kaunitz thanked her in his mistress's name for the zeal she had shown in the new alliance, and he added words that were sweet to a woman who, a few years ago, had been the wife of a farmer-general, consorting with bourgeoises and judges of the Parliament. "The equity and discernment of the king," he wrote her, "and your indefatigable zeal for his true interests, make me hope that we are near the consummation of the greatest creation that has ever proceeded from any cabinet in Europe." He did not forget that, if Mme. de Pompadour aspired to be a politician, she was still a woman. "You do not doubt," he added, "that it is with the greatest impatience I await the charming portrait for which M. de la Tour makes me languish so long. . . . Do me the grace to send it as soon as possible." [1]

It was nearly a year after Frederick's invasion of Saxony, when France and Austria agreed on the terms of their league against him; the second treaty of Versailles was signed on May 1, 1757; it was unwise in its terms, and proved disastrous in its results. By it Louis XV. agreed to furnish one hundred and five thousand men for the war against Prussia, besides paying ten thousand German mercenaries and giving Maria Theresa a subsidy of thirty million livres annu-

[1] Kaunitz to Mme. de Pompadour, October 10, 1756.

ally. The treaty provided for the partition of Prussia to the fullest extent demanded by the vindictive spirit of Maria Theresa; Austria was to have Silesia and Glatz; Crossen, Magdeburg, Halberstadt, Pomerania, Gueldres, and the succession of Cleves were also to be taken from Prussia to satisfy the other powers who would assist in Frederick's overthrow, "in order," said the treaty, "that it might no longer be in his power to disturb the public tranquillity."

France was to furnish an army of over a hundred thousand men, besides large subsidies, while the empress queen bound herself to furnish only eighty thousand, but when it came to the question of the spoils, the distribution was to be made on a very different scale. France was to have nothing until her allies had obtained possession of all the provinces of which Frederick was to be despoiled, and the Prussian king had by a solemn treaty consented to the dismemberment of his kingdom. Those who knew the character of Frederick the Great could judge how long it would be before he would set his hand to an instrument which would humiliate him before the world and expose him to the contempt of Europe.

Even then, France was not to receive the Low Countries, which it has been said were the bait that drew her into this alliance. Doubtless, if the French agents had insisted, they could have obtained the promise of this reward; but though Kaunitz was prepared to concede it, he rightly judged that Louis XV. would be more attracted by advantages for his family than for his kingdom. Ostend, Ypres, Mons, Furnes, and some other cities were to be ceded to France, but all the rest of the Austrian Netherlands, Brussels, Antwerp, and by far the richest parts of that great

territory, were to be given to the Spanish infante, Don Philip, in exchange for his possessions in Italy, and upon the failure of his heirs they were, with the exception of Tournay, again to become the property of Austria.

Even if Don Philip left posterity, the value to France of putting Bourbon princes upon European thrones was illustrated at that very moment, for it was impossible to induce the Bourbon king who ruled in Spain to assist France in her war with England; he watched the contest between the two nations with as strict impartiality as the Sultan of Turkey.[1]

So regardless of the true interests of France were the king and his favorite and the ingenious abbé, who was her favorite adviser, that France did not obtain even a promise of the Low Countries in return for the enormous efforts which she agreed to make; if the war resulted successfully, Louis's son-in-law, and not his kingdom, would reap the advantage. The day was past when French diplomacy was conducted by men who had no equals in ability.

Maria Theresa was equally successful in obtaining other allies for her crusade against Frederick, though they made better terms for themselves. Sweden, Bavaria, the Elector Palatine, and most of Germany joined the league. Some were to share in the spoils of Prussia, others received subsidies from France, for there seemed no limit to the amount which the French government was willing to expend in behalf of its new ally.

[1] If the Spanish king remained neutral, certainly he was not friendly. Kaunitz told the French ambassador that the Spanish representatives at Vienna exerted all their efforts in behalf of England. Letter to Rouillé, June 2, 1756.

By a former treaty, Russia was bound to furnish aid to Austria if attacked by Prussia, and in the spring of 1756 Elizabeth intimated her willingness to join an offensive combination and begin the attack on Frederick.[1] This intimation resulted in no formal agreement, but in February, 1757, the treaty of St. Petersburg was signed, by which Russia agreed to furnish eighty thousand men to the cause, and in return Maria Theresa promised to do her utmost to obtain for her ally the duchy of Courland and other possessions, for which Frederick was ultimately to pay.[2]

[1] Letters of Esterhazy, May and June, 1756, cited by Arneth.

[2] This agreement was not embodied in the treaty. The treaty itself is published by Schaefer.

CHAPTER XIV.

WAR WITH FREDERICK.

During the year 1756, France was at war with England alone, and she was successful both in the Old World and the New. The conquest of Minorca secured an important position in the Mediterranean, Montcalm captured Oswego, and the expedition of the English colonists against Ticonderoga was unsuccessful. In 1757, France entered the combination against Frederick, and from that time the history of the Seven Years' war is a record of French defeat. France lost her colonies because her strength was exhausted in the Continental war, but other reasons help to explain the disasters which cost her Canada in the West and India in the East. The result of the contest between the two nations was insured by the differences between the two governments.

In population, in the amount of national revenue, France had the advantage; in the skill and courage of her soldiers she was certainly not inferior; her marine had been neglected, but this neglect could have been remedied; it needed only to employ in building and equipping ships the means which the proceeds of taxation could easily have furnished, and there were plenty of hardy sailors and of good officers to man them. But England was a free and, on the whole, a well-governed country; the taxes levied upon the people were collected with little waste and, for the most part, were judiciously expended; in

France an absolute monarchy was administered by a weak king, abuses were found in every branch of the government, taxation was unfairly distributed and was profligately expended. The reverses of 1756 excited the indignation of the English people and drove from power the incompetent politicians to whom they were in part due; in the summer of 1757, the greatest war minister that England has seen was forced upon the sovereign who bore him no love, and William Pitt secured for his country victory instead of defeat.

Very different was the progress of affairs in France. Machault had been at the head of the navy department since 1754, and he had shown a considerable degree of energy in strengthening the marine for the great contest; he was entitled to the credit of the expedition against Port Mahon; he was strenuous in demanding seventy-five million livres for his department, and at least he obtained the promise of it; if not a great minister, he was a respectable one. Argenson had long been the minister of war; he was a man of much experience, and, though far from being an administrator like Louvois, he possessed both energy and ability. In 1757, at the very beginning of a great war, both of these ministers were abruptly removed. There was no pretense that they were displaced to make way for better men; they were disgraced at the demand of the imperious favorite, who wished every position of importance to be filled by her protégés. Argenson had persistently refused to pay court to Mme. de Pompadour; but Machault owed his place to her influence, and was counted among her friends. On the 5th of January, 1757, as the king was about to enter his carriage, a fanatic named Damiens plunged a knife into his side. The wound was not serious, but

Louis feared the weapon might be poisoned and the results prove fatal. The court was greatly agitated, though the courtiers were disturbed, so one of them tells us, not so much over the fate of the king as of the favorite: would Louis in his terror repeat the scenes of Metz; would Mme. de Pompadour be summarily banished; was it wiser to visit her or to stay away? In this emergency the conduct of Machault was unsatisfactory; he had a long interview with the king, and instead of at once reporting it to Mme. de Pompadour, as was his custom, he delayed during a whole day, and his embarrassed manner created doubts as to his fidelity.[1]

It was soon ascertained that the king was in no danger. His assailant proved to be a weak-brained enthusiast; he had been told that Louis was a wicked man who wasted the money of his subjects, and his purpose, as he asserted, was not to kill the king, but to compel him to attend to the needs of his people and the demands of the Parliament.[2] He was punished with the refinement of cruelty still found in French judicial procedure. After being tormented in order to force him to reveal his accomplices, Damiens was placed on a table in sight of the crowd; he was tortured with burning tongs and molten lead, horses were used to tear him asunder, and as this was not successful, he was slowly hacked to pieces. An hour and a quarter were thus occupied before the miserable man was dead, and no tribe of Iroquois could have manifested more barbarous cruelty in torturing to death

[1] *Mém. de Bernis*, i. ch. 31, 32. Bernis continued constant, and was rewarded for his fidelity. *Mém. de Hausset.*

[2] *Pièces originales du Procès fait à Robert François Damiens*, 1757.

some hostile chief. The horrible spectacle was watched with as much interest at Paris as it would have been among the Five Nations. An enormous crowd filled the great Place de la Grève, the roofs and even the chimneys of the houses around the square were alive with spectators; ladies paid twenty louis for a window; they played cards till the torturing began, and then amused themselves with the sight until the wretch expired.[1]

Machault, for his treason to Mme. de Pompadour, did not suffer the fate of Damiens, but he was not allowed to escape with impunity. So soon as the king's recovery was assured, the favorite demanded the removal of her old enemy Argenson, and of the faint-hearted Machault. Louis disliked to change his servants, and on the night the order was given for their retirement, Bernis found the king sitting in the favorite's room in exceedingly bad humor. If the sovereign pouted, he obeyed, and on February 1, 1757, the two ministers were exiled from court.[2]

It was among the anomalies of French administration that offices, even of the highest importance, were often disposed of in advance by favor or by sale, and not only in the Parliament but at the king's council appeared youths whose families had solicited or bought for them the right to a place. A lad of ten or fifteen might receive a promise of appointment to the secretaryship of war or of the marine; when the vacancy occurred, the charge of armies that were to encounter the veterans of Frederick, or of fleets that must be

[1] *Luynes*, xv. 494, etc.; *Mém. de Barbier; Mém. de Hausset*, 115.

[2] For this intrigue the best authority is Bernis, who was Mme. de Pompadour's confidant. *Mém.*, i. ch. 32.

equipped to resist the squadrons of Pococke and Hawke, was put in the hands of some inexperienced youth, who had not always attained his majority, and whose qualifications for the position were not even considered.

The department of war was now intrusted to Argenson's nephew, the Marquis of Paulmy, — a young man of thirty-four, who had shown no capacity for the place, was called to fill it at the beginning of a great war, because he held the succession; while the marine was in like manner given to Moras, another young man, who had already succeeded his father-in-law as comptroller general. No man could have attended to the duties of both offices, and Moras was not competent to perform the duties of either office. Such were the men at the head of the army and the navy when the war fairly began. "It was soon seen," writes another minister, "that the hands which held the reins of the war office and the marine were too feeble; confusion and license reigned supreme in these departments." [1]

By the spring of 1757, the combination against Frederick was organized, and from that time the chief interest of France was in the Continental war in which she had embarked. At first sight the odds against the Prussian king seemed so great that his escape from overthrow was thought impossible. In reality, they were much less than they appeared. Certainly he was in peril, and, had not fortune favored him, not even his genius could have prevailed against his enemies. In population and wealth the difference between Prussia and her enemies was enormous, but Frederick soon made a further treaty with England

[1] *Mém. de Bernis.*

which secured him a regular and trusty paymaster. He was himself the greatest living general, and the leaders by whom he was opposed were for the most part far below mediocrity. Not only did he win many victories by reason of their scandalous inefficiency, but the condition of the Prussian army was superior to that of any other European nation. Nominally, the forces which marched against Frederick in the year 1757 numbered between three and four hundred thousand men, while under his command were about two hundred thousand, and the English had in the field some fifty thousand more. The difference in the real strength of the armies was less than these figures indicate; as a result of rigid discipline and unwearied drilling, Frederick's troops were the best in the world, while the war soon exposed the defects that existed in the armies of his opponents.

The quality of the French soldiers was not bad, if they had been well disciplined and well officered, but in both those respects there were grievous lacks. A serious defect in the very organization of the French army largely diminished its effectiveness. As a rule, a company was recruited by its captain, who received from the government a certain sum for raising his men; they became, as was said, the soldiers of the captain and not of the king; he drew the money allowed for their rations and their clothes, and the opportunities for fraud were great; camp followers stayed in the ranks when an inspection was made and were counted as recruits, and many an officer increased his emoluments by leaving his men without shoes, or by furnishing them with scanty fare. Not only was the material condition of the men frequently bad, but alike in the field and in the camp, they were often

under the command of those who were ill fitted to perform their duties, and poor officers make poor soldiers. There were many reasons for this state of things. When promotion was due to favor or to purchase, it was not strange that many held responsible commands who had neither the ability nor the experience to fill them. Many a lad of seventeen was colonel of a regiment. "In France," said Marshal Saxe, "a young man of rank thinks he is neglected by the court if he is not a colonel at twenty, and this destroys all emulation among the other officers."[1] A veteran of forty might hope to become a captain, but his chance of promotion to a colonelcy was poor indeed. "Remember that there is a difference between us," said a young marquis, who had just purchased his regiment, to his lieutenant-colonel. "Yes," replied the subordinate, "you owe your position to forty thousand crowns, and I owe mine to forty years of service."

The condition of the officers as a body can be best described by one of the ablest of the French generals during the Seven Years' war. "I have often reflected," wrote Marshal Broglie, "on the faults to which are due our ill successes. . . . I will content myself with giving the chief one; it is the entire ignorance, from subaltern officers to lieutenant-generals, of the duties of their positions, and of the details to which it is necessary to attend. The lieutenants and captains don't know how to direct their companies, nor the colonels and brigadiers their commands. . . . It is on the perfection with which a lieutenant manœuvres thirty men, a captain fifty, and a colonel his regiment . . . that depends the success of a battle.

[1] *Mes Rêveries*, 61.

. . . In this respect the enemy have a great advantage over us; their generals and superior officers have passed through the subaltern grades and have had long service." [1]

There were other evils besides unfamiliarity with tactics and a want of skill in managing men in battle. Most of the officers were nobles, and while they never lacked bravery, they often lacked discipline; the eager desire for promotion, which led many a courtier to desert Versailles for the Rhine, often refused to yield to the interests of the service. The iron rule of Frederick silenced all bickerings in his camp, but among the French, jealousy and ill will had to do with many a shameful defeat.

The inordinate luxury found among the gentlemen who commanded the French soldiers was not only costly, but it was subversive of discipline, and it was difficult to impose obedience to orders on young nobles who looked upon war as a diversion. The Duke of Richelieu's son wished to go to Paris in search of amusement; as he could not obtain a leave of absence, he left without it, and he had the audacity to present himself at court. If Louvois had been minister of war and Louis XIV. king, the offender would have been disgraced and deprived of his regiment; Louis XV. smiled as he saw the young recalcitrant, and asked him to supper.[2]

The retinue of officers of rank was hardly less splendid by the Weser than by the Seine; silver plate, fine porcelain, and choice crystal adorned their

[1] Marshal Broglie to his uncle, 1759.

[2] *Mém. de Luynes*, xvii. 113. Even the cautious duke questions the wisdom of countenancing such infractions of military discipline.

tables, and on them were found the best wines and the most delicate dishes; the size of the baggage trains was enormously increased by the articles of comfort, of luxury, and of display which had to be transported over the bad roads of the period. Officers traveled in sedan chairs or in chariots, and the number of wagons required for their luggage was immense. One captain had six horses and three valets, another had five domestics and fourteen horses, and these were ordinary cases. The ordinances allowed much, and the officers took more; a lieutenant-general was entitled to keep thirty horses, and he had sixty. When Richelieu was only a colonel, seventy-two mules were needed to carry his luggage, he had thirty horses for himself, he was attended by a host of valets, his tents were hardly inferior in splendor to those of the king. We read without surprise that the servants and sutlers and camp followers almost equaled the soldiers in numbers, and that the retinue of the Prussian king did not approach that of a French general.[1]

Different, indeed, from such prodigal luxury was the Spartan discipline which prevailed in the armies of Frederick. "Not an officer," he wrote, "no matter what his name, the generals not excepted, shall have any silverware, not as much as a silver spoon; they shall be served on pewter, without exception, no matter for whom."[2] It was not alone from motives of economy that Frederick imposed such regulations and enforced them with merciless severity; he wanted about him no luxurious gentlemen who regarded a

[1] *Reflexions sur le logement des officiers généraux; Cor. de St. Germain;* Rousset, *Comte de Gisors.*

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, xiii. 207.

battle as an agreeable interlude to champagne suppers and high play; he knew that such practices among the officers meant careless discipline and marauding among the men, and he would have none of it.

It is safe to say that in efficiency and discipline neither the Austrian nor the Russian army was superior to that of France. Apart from the difference in the quality of troops, Frederick had in his favor the certainty that divided counsels would prevail among the allies, and the fact that they must necessarily operate on different lines; most of all, the superiority of his own genius made the contest, not indeed an equal one, but one of which it was impossible to predict the result.

Frederick began the campaign of 1757 by advancing into Bohemia, and the first battle showed what he might hope from the faults of the generals who were pitted against him. If Maria Theresa was equal to Frederick in courage and resolution, she was far inferior to him in intelligence; ready to risk her last man in order to cripple her enemy's power, she showed a scanty judgment in her choice of those who were to accomplish the task. Prince Charles of Lorraine was her brother-in-law, but his lamentable failures in the past should have taught the queen that military genius was not necessarily found with princely blood. She again made him commander-in-chief of her forces, and he again entered the field to be outwitted and defeated by Frederick. In May, the armies met almost under the walls of Prague; the tactics of Prince Charles were no match for those of his antagonist, his army was defeated, and he took refuge in the city. Frederick now hoped to capture the town, and erelong to dictate terms under the walls of Vienna, but a month

later his anticipations were blasted. An Austrian army under Marshal Daun came to the rescue of Prague, and in the great battle of Kolin Frederick suffered one of the most disastrous defeats of his career; he lost fourteen thousand men killed and wounded, and was forced to abandon Bohemia. It was the first great battle won by the Austrians over the Prussian king, and at Vienna there was unbounded exultation. Even Frederick's own family declared that his ruin was accomplished. "At last Phaeton has fallen," wrote his brother, "and we don't know what will become of us. The day of the 18th will forever be a fatal one to Brandenburg."[1] Frederick himself did not view the prospect any more hopefully, and he indulged in the threats of suicide which he often uttered in times of disaster. "I will take leave of the whole establishment," he writes. "This course is not in conformity with the Christian religion, and I like it all the better for that reason."[2]

But victory did not bring wisdom to Frederick's enemies. The feeling was general at Vienna that Prince Charles was unfit to be commander, and that it was better to succeed with Marshal Daun than to be beaten with Prince Charles. Such an idea was no more favorably received by the rulers at Vienna, than were similar complaints by the authorities at Versailles. Influenced, it is said, by the solicitations of her husband, who was an exceptionally stupid man, Maria Theresa decided to retain Prince Charles as commander-in-chief, and Daun was obliged to act under his orders. The victory of Kolin checked Frederick's

[1] Prince Henry to Princess Amelia, cited by Arneth. The letter fell into the hands of the Austrians.

[2] *Pol. Cor.*, xv. 382 *et pas.*

advance on Vienna, but there was no great general to utilize its fruits to the utmost, and before the year was ended the Prussian king had discomfited all his enemies.

While Frederick was contending with varying fortunes against the Austrians, the French entered the field, and with over one hundred thousand men approached the Rhine. The forces were sufficient, but it was a grave question who should command them. In the field, as in the cabinet, the voice of the favorite was potent, and her principle of selection was simple; she treated the position of commander-in-chief as she would a rich abbey or a well-paid sinecure, — it was to be filled by a friend. The Prince of Soubise had a foremost place in her favor, and unfortunately it was military glory for which the prince longed. Though an estimable man, his qualifications for command consisted only of an amiable character and excellent manners. But Soubise belonged to the great family of Rohan, he was a peer, a prince, and connected by marriage with the royal family; what availed him most of all, he paid assiduous court to the favorite. It was perhaps her bourgeois origin which made it sweet for Mme. de Pompadour to bestow her patronage on one of such illustrious descent, and her resolve that the Prince of Soubise should command an army and receive a marshal's baton was the cause of some of the most humiliating defeats in the annals of French military history.

It was indeed impossible to give Soubise the chief command at the beginning of the war, for the past services of Marshal Estrées so designated him for that office that he could not be passed over. A grandson of Louvois, Estrées had been a soldier for almost

forty years, and by long and honorable service had won the rank of marshal of France. He was a strict disciplinarian, but he had the confidence of his soldiers and did not forfeit their affection. Accordingly he was now selected as commander-in-chief of the French army, and he at once advanced into Westphalia. On the 26th of July, he attacked the allied forces under the command of the Duke of Cumberland at Hastenbeck. That general met with his usual ill fortune; his army was defeated, and the most of Hanover and Brunswick fell into the hands of the French.[1]

Frederick's prospects now seemed dark indeed; he had been repulsed in Bohemia, his allies were worsted in Hanover, and in August the Russian contingent, one hundred thousand strong, defeated the scanty force which he was able to send to oppose them. "I never entered the king's chamber," wrote the exultant Bernis, "except to bring good news; as they saw me pass they would say to one another, 'his countenance shows that another battle has been won.'"[2] The prospect soon changed, and the mistakes of his enemies gave Frederick an opportunity to retrieve a situation which seemed desperate.

While the soldiers by the Weser and the citizens in Paris were rejoicing over the victory won by Estrées, and while Te Deums were still resounding in the churches, came the astounding intelligence that the victorious general had been removed from the command. The intrigues by which this was brought about had long been brewing. Mme. de Pompadour

[1] *Journal Hanoverian; Relation d'Estrées;* Rousset, *Comte de Gisors.*

[2] *Mémoires,* i. 389.

wished an independent command to be found for him whom she constantly styled "my dear Soubise." Duverney, her adviser, a man of parts, of arrogance, and of intrigue, hated Estrées, and Richelieu and Soubise had wisely stayed away from the field, knowing that promotion was to be won in the chamber of the favorite rather than by the Rhine or the Weser. Before the battle of Hastenbeck, Estrées's fate was decided, and his victory did not change the decision. He was removed, not because he had been unsuccessful, but because he was not the man whom Mme. de Pompadour wished to succeed. Soubise was given command of an army to operate on the Danube, and Richelieu became commander of the forces in Hanover. An amiable neophyte was sent to defeat Frederick, and a corrupt braggart was chosen to ruin the discipline of the army which Estrées had led to victory.[1]

Already public feeling had so changed in France that the public discussed its rulers with a freedom unknown a century before. It may be said that never had there been so much to criticise as in the later years of Louis XV.'s reign, and the voice of censure now spared neither monarch nor institutions. The removal of Estrées excited a storm of disapproval. "This news displeases the public, which is in favor of Marshal Estrées," writes the chronicler of Paris. "The change," said the Duke of Luynes, expressing the sentiments of the upper social classes, "is an event which posterity can hardly believe; a battle gained, a country conquered . . . it is then the general is recalled. It is pretended that this arrangement was

[1] This intrigue is described in the letters of Duverney and Richelieu. *Mémoirs de Bernis,* etc.

made without the knowledge of the king or of Mme. de Pompadour, but how can one believe that?" [1]

Though public criticism made itself heard, it could not yet make itself respected. "The commotion has been such as I expected," wrote Duverney. "I am accused, as if such decisions were the results of favoritism and fantasy and intrigue, and not of a profound knowledge of the subject. They may say what they please; I am too old to be frightened." [2]

Richelieu and Soubise assumed their commands, and Estrées left the field. The task before Richelieu seemed an easy one; he had under his orders over one hundred and twenty thousand men. Cumberland could not collect one half that number, and his forces were demoralized by defeat; a competent general could have forced them to an unconditional surrender.[3] But the dissolute profligate, who had earned the king's favor by acting as a procurer, made a lamentable exhibition of inefficiency and corruption in the field in which he was now placed. Led away by an overweening vanity, Richelieu flattered himself that he might gain the credit of bringing the war to an end. "The nephew of Cardinal Richelieu," wrote Frederick, who knew how to play on the marshal's weaknesses, "is made for signing treaties no less than for winning battles." [4] Visions of such glory, and the prospect of a long season of tranquil plundering, led Richelieu to make a treaty with the enemy instead of driving them to surrender. On September 8, 1757,

[1] Journals of Barbier and Luynes, August, 1757.

[2] Duverney to Maillebois, August, 2, 1757.

[3] Such was the judgment of Napoleon, *Mém.*, v. 213, and he declares the conduct of Richelieu inexplicable.

[4] Frederick to Richelieu, September 6, 1757.

he signed the famous convention of Kloster Zeven. It was a partial pacification: the French were to keep the territory they occupied, the Hanoverians were to retreat beyond the Elbe, and their allies were to be sent home. The convention was drawn with the carelessness of a great seigneur as to details; no security was required for the fulfillment of its conditions, no time was fixed for its ratification. Cumberland's troops kept their arms and gave no hostages; the allies were extricated from a dangerous position, and were practically free to do what they deemed expedient in the future.

Richelieu confidently expected that the convention into which he had entered would make him appear as an arbiter of war and peace, but he was rudely awakened from his visions of glory. He made the agreement without consulting his government, and no sooner had he reported it than the failure to exact guarantees and to make the most of an advantageous position was dwelt upon in no measured terms. The arrangement was condemned as made without authority and executed without foresight, as combining timidity with imprudence, and its author was declared to be a man who knew no more of politics than a child.[1]

The French government delayed long before ratifying the convention; the English government went further and refused to ratify it at all, and it is hard to see that it can be charged with bad faith. It could be plausibly argued that no general had authority to enter into what was in reality a treaty. When the allied forces were extricated from their danger, they not improperly took advantage of their opponent's

[1] These are the criticisms passed by Bernis in his letters to Stainville.

folly, and refused to respect the agreement which Cumberland had made.

No sooner had it been signed, than Richelieu scattered his army and devoted himself to the congenial task of levying contributions, and his irritation at his failure as a diplomat was solaced by the pecuniary advantages which he reaped from his command. The plundering in which he indulged would not have been unworthy a general of Wallenstein, and the provinces of Germany were now richer spoil than in the Thirty Years' war.[1] Impositions were levied, exemptions from plunder were sold; from the sale of these in Brunswick alone, Richelieu received almost one hundred and fifty thousand livres, and this was a small item in the profits of the campaign. The Pavilion of Hanover in the street Louis le Grand still stands as a memorial of the wealth which the marshal wrung from that country.

While the general was absorbed in plundering, it was impossible to keep the soldiers from following his example. Father Marauder was the nickname they gave their commander, and they found him a better leader in the paths of gain than of glory. "The disorder, the insubordination, and the brigandage of the army of Monsieur de Richelieu," wrote an old soldier, "have passed all bounds. I have never seen anything which approached it in the fifty-six years that I have served."[2] "The lack of discipline among our troops," said Bernis, "and the sordid avarice of our generals make all Germany hostile to us."[3]

[1] "It is certain," remarks Frederick, "that the sums which poured into the hands of the marshal considerably diminished his warlike ardor."

[2] Belle Isle to Soubise, December 3, 1877.

[3] Bernis to Stainville, November 1, 1757.

It was not only bad discipline and impatience of orders, but the more sordid vice of greed that played a part in the defeats of the Seven Years' war; the old régime was plainly nearing its end when noblemen preferred looting to fighting, and the monarch preferred the *parc aux cerfs* to the council chamber.

While the advantages that had been gained in Hanover were lost by Richelieu's incapacity, still worse disaster befell the protégé of Mme. de Pompadour. The task assigned Soubise was to drive Frederick out of Saxony, and in this enterprise he was joined by a German contingent under Prince Hildburghausen. Though Soubise had been eager to have an army under his orders, he found himself much embarrassed when his wish was gratified. The soldiers had no confidence in their new leader, he never had commanded in a battle, and he soon might have to encounter the greatest of living generals. The French authorities insisted, indeed, that the latter contingency was unlikely. "Is it natural to believe," wrote Duverney of Frederick, "that he would be so rash as to come with thirty thousand men where he could be opposed by a hundred thousand?"[1] "I do not believe that the king of Prussia will advance as far as here," said Soubise, with whom doubtless the wish was father to the belief.[2]

Disregarding the prophecies of such critics, Frederick hastened to the relief of Leipsic, which was threatened by the allied army. "I am in full march," he wrote his sister, "and between now and December I will change the face of destiny."[3] His opponent was

[1] Duverney to Dumesnil, September 27.

[2] Correspondence of Soubise, cited by Rousset.

[3] *Pol. Cor.*, xv. 435, October 17.

now greatly troubled by the position in which he found himself. Not at all afraid of danger, Soubise was very much afraid of fighting a battle, and his tactics showed the timidity which in a general is as bad as physical cowardice. Hildburghausen was ready to take the chances of an engagement, but Soubise was unwilling, and the allied forces slowly fell back. The unfortunate French commander was exposed to peril by his associates as well as by his adversaries; Richelieu was ordered to send reinforcements, but he had no wish to further the success of a rival, and he availed himself of every pretext to escape obedience. Only after long delay, and in response to the most peremptory orders, was a detachment, somewhat smaller than required, at last sent, and so strange were the prevailing notions of military discipline that Richelieu claimed much credit for having even partially obeyed the commands of his government.

Thus reinforced, Soubise had some thirty-five thousand French soldiers, and there were also about fifteen thousand Germans. But his German allies, so Soubise declared, were more hindrance than help, and this was perhaps true. They were drawn from the smaller states of the empire; they were poorly disciplined, and had no heart for a war against the Prussian king; the most of them were probably more anxious for his success than his defeat. Hildburghausen, their general, was indeed zealous in the cause, but he was an indifferent officer, and he and Soubise differed on every question; if the one wished to advance, the other was sure to think it best to fall back; the plan approved by the German commander was certain to be disapproved by the French commander.

Though the army of the allies was twice as large as

his own, Frederick moved forward with the intention of attacking them. Finding their position too strong, he stationed himself at Rossbach, a little village near by. Encouraged by the belief that Frederick was retreating, his opponents decided to begin the attack, and a little after noon on the 5th of November, 1757, the French and German forces advanced rapidly and confidently towards the hills, behind the crest of which Frederick had stationed his troops. They had a vast superiority in numbers; the Prussians were not over twenty-two thousand strong, while the allies had nearly fifty thousand men, yet the battle was won by Frederick with an ease rarely equaled. As the allies came on they were met by a hot and well-directed fire, while the Prussian cavalry charged vigorously on their right. They broke at once. Though Soubise and Hildburghausen showed no capacity as generals, and were utterly at a loss against Frederick's tactics, both of them displayed courage as soldiers. They endeavored to rally their forces, but in vain; the Prussians pushed on vigorously, and the allies fled in confusion; it was a rout rather than a battle, — the whole engagement hardly lasted an hour. The French and Germans lost two thousand killed and wounded, and five thousand prisoners, while Frederick's loss did not exceed five hundred men.[1]

The battle of Rossbach was a memorable contest. Though Germans fought side by side with French, the victory was justly regarded as one of Prussia over France. Frederick had won many victories, but never

[1] The battle is described by Soubise and Frederick, and by many others. The story is told by all in much the same way. "C'était une bataille en douceur," Frederick wrote his sister. *Pol. Cor.*, xvi. 8.

before had he encountered the French in the field; now the armies of a nation which for more than a century had been confessedly the first military power of Europe had fled like sheep before Prussian veterans led by Frederick the Great. The enthusiasm was immense, and Frederick for the first time was regarded as a national German hero, the character which he has retained with posterity.

The just enthusiasm of the Prussians was equaled by the just indignation of the French. Soubise, said the voice of public indignation, had been given the command of an army through the intrigues of Mme. de Pompadour, that there might be some pretext to make him a marshal; to his ambition and his presumption, the lives of French soldiers and the glory of the French nation had been sacrificed.[1]

Frederick had no time to pursue the defeated army; the Austrians were advancing through Silesia; already an enterprising partisan had penetrated to the gates of Berlin and compelled the city to pay a heavy ransom. In her delight that such an affront had been inflicted upon her rival, Maria Theresa bestowed a great estate in Hungary upon the fortunate general.[2] "What times, what a year," wrote Frederick to his brother, when he heard the enemy were at Berlin; "happy are the dead."[3] A few days after the battle of Rossbach, the Austrians defeated Frederick's lieutenant at Breslau with a loss of nine thousand men, and they boasted that this victory would mark the end of his rule in Silesia.

Undismayed by such calamities, the king hastened

[1] *Mém. de Barbier*, and numerous contemporary pamphlets and letters.

[2] Arneth, v. 243.

[3] *Pol. Cor.*, xv. 436.

to assume the command in person, and on December 5, he met the Austrian forces on the memorable field of Leuthen. For the last time, Prince Charles was outgeneraled by his great adversary. The Austrians lost twenty thousand men; their army was scattered, and the remnants found refuge in Bohemia. In July of 1757, Frederick's ruin seemed almost certain; by December, he had overthrown his enemies, he had beaten both French and Austrians, he had defeated armies twice as large as his own, Silesia was rescued, Saxony was still in his grasp, and all Europe rang with his fame.

Frederick was now confident that spring would bring peace, but he had to contend with the stubborn tenacity of Maria Theresa, the petty animosities of Elizabeth, and the infatuation of Mme. de Pompadour, and he did not yet realize their force. Already he had made overtures to France; he instructed his agent to offer the favorite a million and a half livres if she would secure him peace, and if this was not enough, he would make her a princess, and she should reign over Neuchâtel. If such offers were communicated, they came too late; the overtures of Frederick in distress could not draw Mme. de Pompadour from her adherence to Maria Theresa, and she remained constant to the cause of the Austrian alliance.[1] Instead of having peace in six months, Frederick had to fight six years more to obtain it.

His enemies already acknowledged that his overthrow would not be soon accomplished, and some of them began to doubt whether it could be accomplished at all. The great victories of the year excited the utmost enthusiasm among his English allies, and his

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xv. 377; xvi. 78, etc.

birthday was celebrated at London with more enthusiasm than that of George II.; the sympathy of the minor German states was not of much importance, but it was extended to the Prussian king, even when their rulers were nominally in arms against him.

It was not alone in Germany and England that Frederick found partisans; the disasters which had been sustained created in Paris a party ready to praise the Prussian and condemn the French king. Even before the war began, Frederick had his French advocates; while the dauphine demanded vengeance for her parents' woes, and politicians proclaimed the wisdom of the Austrian alliance, there were many who justified Frederick's course and defended all his acts. "The king of Prussia," wrote Luynes, "has many partisans even in Paris." [1]

These critics of the government became more confident in their views as Frederick continued to gain glory and the French generals to gain ignominy. Says the Abbé Morellet, speaking of the philosophers and wits who gathered at Mme. Geoffrin's table, and who exercised so great an influence on French society, "We took a tender interest in the success of the king of Prussia; we were in consternation when he suffered defeat and radiant when he had beaten the Austrians; we were indignant at the coalition of European powers formed against a monarch whom we regarded as a philosopher." [2]

Financial embarrassments were added to other troubles of the French government. It was not that the country was growing poorer, or that it was exhausted by the war. France had already begun a

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, September, 1756.

[2] *Mém. de Morellet*, i. 86.

period of great industrial development, the receipts from taxes had for years steadily increased, and, though the expenses were large, yet the country was free from the most costly of evils, — invasion by a hostile army. But the wastefulness which prevailed more than offset these advantages. There were endeavors to reduce the inordinate expenses of the court, and it was found that savings to the amount of six millions could easily be made; but when the list was submitted to the king, he struck out the reductions until only three hundred thousand livres were left.[1] It was by such resistance that any effort at economy was met. There could be no retrenchment that was not at some one's cost, and those interested in the continuance of abuses had the ear of the king and of his ministers. When lavishness reigned at Versailles, when the pension list was increasing, the expenses of the favorite growing no less, and pillage in every department was unrestrained, the French government, notwithstanding its great revenues, found itself more distressed for money than Frederick with his scanty resources, every penny of which was rigorously watched and frugally expended.

As a reward for his services in the negotiations with Austria, Bernis had been made minister of foreign affairs, and he seemed so intrenched in the favor of the king and of Mme. de Pompadour that the public looked upon him as a possible prime minister. The abbé was an amiable and a patriotic man, and possessed more intelligence in public affairs than he has been credited with. He was, indeed, ill fitted for stormy times, and his courage failed him in the great contest which he had taken an active part in arousing. But if he was timid, timid counsels were the wisest;

[1] *Mém. de Bernis,* ii. 85.

having made the fatal mistake of going to war against Frederick, the best thing to do was to make peace as soon as possible. It was this policy which the abbé now advocated, and his pictures of the lamentable condition of the French government are valuable, because he had great opportunities of seeing the evils of which he told. The political machine, he wrote, as disasters succeeded the first victories won by Estrées, was an abysm of abuses; "we have no administration, . . . the men in office are unfit for their work, and the public has no confidence in them. Mme. de Pompadour controls the government with the caprices of an infant, while the king looks blandly on, undisturbed by our inquietudes and indifferent to public embarrassments." [1] It was, indeed, with the placid indifference of a Chinese monarch or of a Chinese god that Louis XV. watched the disintegration of the ancient French monarchy. "Never before," said Bernis, "did any one play at so great stakes with the unconcern that he would show at a game of cards."

The picture which the abbé drew was little overcharged, and from it he reached a just conclusion. "Neither we nor our allies know how to carry on war," he said; "we must have peace with Prussia, or we shall lose our colonies, and the conflict will end in defeat and disgrace." [2]

Such timid counsels received no favorable response from Maria Theresa; the war against Frederick was one in which she had much to gain; if the coalition which she had formed could not succeed, it was certain that Silesia was forever lost, the power of Prussia

[1] Bernis to Stainville, December 13, 1757; February 9, January 25, March 17, April 27, May 13, 1758, *et pas.*

[2] *Ib.*, April 16, 18, 1758, *et pas.*

forever established; if it was for her to decide, she declared, rather than submit to the domination of the Prussian king, she would carry on the contest, if she had to defend her last village with her last battalion.[1]

France had no such motives for continuing the war, but Mme. de Pompadour prided herself on sharing the views of her imperial friend and ally. "I hate the victor," she wrote after Leuthen, "more than I have ever hated him. . . . Let us adopt wise measures; let us pulverize the Attila of the North, and you will see me as contented as now I am ill humored."[2] The foreboding of Bernis lessened his favor, and did not influence his patrons. "The abbé," wrote the favorite, "lends himself too much to the fantasies of the public and to a desire to please. He will be their dupe one day, and it is a pity that he has the defect of thinking too much about himself, for otherwise he has the qualities of a great minister."[3]

It was decided to carry on the war with all possible vigor. The scandals excited by Richelieu's greed at last compelled his recall. After the lamentable exhibition of Soubise's incapacity at Rossbach, it was impossible, for the moment, to give him an important command, but another applicant for promotion, still more illustrious in rank, was chosen by Mme. de Pompadour as Richelieu's successor.

Louis of Bourbon, Count of Clermont, a great-grandson of the famous Condé, has been called an instance of an ecclesiastic bearing arms, long after the era of warlike bishops and abbots had ended. In

[1] Stainville to Bernis, April, 1758.

[2] Pompadour to Starhemberg, December 17, 1757.

[3] Kaunitz to Starhemberg, June 12, 1758, quoting a letter of Mme. de Pompadour.

truth, it is a misnomer to call Clermont an ecclesiastic. The cases were not rare in the eighteenth century where a nominal connection with the church was only a pretext for increasing one's income by fat livings, and of such abuses Clermont was the most notable example. A son of the Prince of Condé, at eight he was colonel of a regiment, at nine he received the tonsure and was made Abbé of Bec, and by the time he was fourteen he was the nominal head of five religious establishments. The tonsure was the extent of his connection with religious life, but it enabled him to hold benefices, which the influence of his family procured. He received many; he was made Abbé of St. Germain des Prés, which brought him one hundred and sixty thousand livres, and, in all, his sinecures yielded him three hundred thousand a year. The abbé was as little ecclesiastical in his dress as in his manners; his garments were those of the world, and he was as richly covered with laces and embroideries as any young courtier who paid his court to the king and the ladies at Versailles. In due time Clermont applied for permission to marry without resigning his benefices. This privilege the Pope refused to grant, but the abbé consoled himself for such an act of rigor. Sharing the preferences of Maurice de Saxe for the drama, he gave to his relations with the ladies of the ballet a certain air of ecclesiastical state. Mlles. Camargo and Le Duc were in turn much admired dancers at the opera, and occupants of the château of Berny, which was one of the possessions of the abbey of St. Germain. Le Duc startled the Parisians by the splendor in which the religious charity of the abbé allowed her to indulge. She drove in the Bois in a carriage all blue and silver drawn by

six ponies, while her diamonds were the envy of all the women who saw her. In view of her connection with the church, the public dubbed her Madame l'Abbesse.

Though the Pope was unwilling to have a married abbé, he acceded to Clermont's request that he might become a soldier without resigning his preferments. The abbé count served for many years, he was always brave, always popular, and often unruly. Marshal Saxe was so good a soldier that he would allow no insubordination, even in a prince of the blood. Clermont decided to yield when he saw that he must obey or quit the service, and he conducted himself with fair credit in the later years of the war of the Austrian Succession.

When the Seven Years' war began, he aspired to be commander-in-chief, and, as modesty was not his weakness, he presented his claims to the king. "The Count of Clermont," said his memorial, "has served in nine campaigns, and taken part in many battles. . . . His modesty suffers from having to state that he has never been unsuccessful in any undertaking with which he has been charged." [1] He failed to receive the appointment, but he continued on good terms with Mme. de Pompadour, and she desired to favor the ambitions of a member of the great House of Condé. Accordingly, in January, 1758, Clermont was made commander of the army of Hanover in Richelieu's place. "I do not despair of seeing the French armies commanded by the Archbishop of Paris," said Frederick, when he heard of the abbé's promotion. In truth, the archbishop would have proved no worse a general. Clermont had been a fairly good officer

[1] *Papiers de Clermont*, cited by Rousset.

in a subordinate position, but he was inferior even to Soubise at the head of an army.

The Hanoverian forces were now commanded by Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, and, with a competent man at their head, they soon retrieved the disasters of Cumberland's campaigns. In size the French army was superior, but its discipline was gone, the number of the sick was large, and its leader was utterly incompetent. The new general showed a timidity which surprised both friends and enemies. Notwithstanding the confidence in his abilities which he had so frankly expressed, Clermont was unwilling to risk a battle against his opponent. As Prince Ferdinand advanced, the abbé fell back; he abandoned Hanover, he retreated across the Weser, leaving his sick behind him, and at last he crossed to the left bank of the Rhine.[1] The government was in despair at such conduct, Maria Theresa complained that the French were deserting the cause, and Mme. de Pompadour tried in vain to inspire her protégé with courage. The minister of war wrote him to risk a battle unless he was certain to be beaten; he construed this letter as an order not to fight unless he was sure to win, and he again retreated.[2] Still, he did not lose his child-like confidence in his abilities; sooner or later, he declared, his critics would understand his manœuvres, and admit that they were intelligent and courageous.[3] In the mean time no one could understand them, and least of all the count himself, who knew no more of military tactics than he did of church doctrines. "We

[1] "L'infâme fuite des Français," said Frederick. *Pol. Cor.*, xvi. 356.

[2] Belle Isle to Clermont, June 19, and reply.

[3] Letter of June.

can expect no success and must fear great misfortunes," wrote one of the best officers in the army, who was soon to lose his life in this ill-directed campaign. "The Count of Clermont has no knowledge of the topography of the country, he can form no plan by himself, and as he does n't wish to be governed by any one person, he follows the advice of the last speaker. . . . The general officers, excluded from his counsels, occupy themselves with criticising their commander, for which there is much cause, and have no trouble in inspiring contempt for him in the army. . . . Good citizens lament, but their number is small." [1]

On June 23, five days after this letter was written, Brunswick overtook the French army, and attacked them at Crefeld. The engagement began at noon, when Clermont was taking his dinner, and it was some time before he realized that the Hanoverian attack meant a serious battle. The French troops made a better resistance than might have been expected, but so poorly were they manœuvred that, though they were superior in numbers, Brunswick had three men to one where the fighting was going on. At six the battle was not lost beyond hope of recovery, and many of the French soldiers had not yet fired a gun, but their commander could not utilize them, and a retreat was ordered. "The Count of Clermont," wrote an ill-affected officer, "was dining at one, had lost a battle before six, reached Neuss at ten, and retired at twelve. He had accomplished much in a short time." [2] The French lost four thousand two hundred men in this engagement, but their army was still fifty thousand

[1] Gisors to Belle Isle, June 18, 1758. The Count of Gisors was mortally wounded at the battle of Crefeld.

[2] *Mémoire sur la campagne de* 1758.

strong, and in good condition. "I hope," wrote Mme. de Pompadour to her unlucky friend, "that you will take your revenge in a fashion to make our enemies long remember that they dared to attack the French, commanded by a grandson of the great Condé." [1] Her wish was not fulfilled, and Prince Ferdinand was not destined to suffer from the temerity he had shown in defeating a Condé. Clermont's incompetence was so apparent that it was impossible to keep him at the head of an army. "Recall the abbé and his novices," wrote an officer, "and give us Marshal Estrées." [2] The request was answered in part. Estrées was not acceptable to the authorities, but Clermont was recalled, and the Marquis of Contades was made commander of the army of the Rhine.

Other changes worked some improvement in the condition of affairs. Paulmy, a timid, indolent, amiable young man, found the responsibility of the war office greater than he could endure; he resigned the position, and Marshal Belle Isle took his place.[3] A soldier of large experience and a man of great energy, he did much towards improving the discipline and the morale of the army. Moras left the navy department, where he had been a nonentity, but there was neither money nor attention to spare for the navy, when a hundred thousand men were fighting the battles of Maria Theresa, and fifty million livres were paid in subsidies to her and her allies. Moras was replaced by Berryer, who accomplished no more than his predecessor.

Under its new leader, the army by the Rhine made

[1] Pompadour to Clermont, June 28, 1758.

[2] Letter of June 27.

[3] Belle Isle was made minister of war in February, 1758.

somewhat better progress. Contades, though not a great soldier, was a fair one, and Prince Ferdinand was obliged to fall back beyond the Rhine. The army under Soubise, whose incapacity did not long deprive him of a command, also won two victories, one at Sandershausen and one at Lutternberg. Neither of them was of much importance, and Soubise's success, as he frankly admitted, was largely due to his lieutenants. Still he had been victorious, there was an excuse for making him a marshal of France, and he promptly received the coveted baton. "I hope the Parisians will talk as much about Lutternberg as they did of Rossbach," said Mme. de Pompadour in her zeal for her protégé. She was disappointed: the public were so weary of disasters that an occasional success did not console them; neither the favorite nor those who owed their places to her were any the better liked for gleams of better fortune. The results of the campaign of 1758 justified the hopeless feeling that nothing could be expected from an inefficient administration; before winter, the French army abandoned Hanover and went into winter quarters on the Rhine; no advantage had been gained that would help to bring the war to a successful end.

Frederick had a checkered military career during this year, but the Austrians, like the French, were unable to utilize the advantages they occasionally won. In August, Frederick inflicted a signal defeat on the Russians, but he was less fortunate with the Austrians. Maria Theresa had at last sacrificed her brother-in-law to the good of the service; Prince Charles retired to the Low Countries and took no further part in the war. The command was given to Daun, and in October, he attacked Frederick at Hochkirch, and after an

obstinate struggle, won a complete victory. The Prussians lost nine thousand men; their camp, the baggage, one hundred cannon, and thirty standards were among the spoils which fell into their enemies' hands. If Daun had been as capable of improving his opportunity as he was of manœuvring an army on the field of battle, Frederick's prospects would have been dark. But Daun did nothing, while Frederick rapidly collected his forces, proceeded to the relief of Dresden, and at the end of the campaign the Austrians had gained a great victory and nothing else.

Two campaigns on the Continent had been indecisive, but in the contest between France and England the English had retrieved their earlier disasters, and the French colonial empire was crumbling to pieces.

In 1757, the English and their colonists, under the leadership of the incompetent Loudon, made little progress; though the French received scanty aid from their government, the balance of success was in their favor, an attempt to take Louisburg failed, and Montcalm captured Fort William Henry. But in the following year, Pitt was at the head of the English government, and the conquest of French America began. In June, the siege of Louisburg, the strongest fortress in America, was again undertaken; the English had Wolfe among their generals, and neither ships nor soldiers were wanting for the work. The French had about five thousand men, and the defense was conducted with bravery and skill by Drucour; but unless aid was received, the capture of the place was only a question of time. No aid was sent. "If we do not lose Louisburg," Bernis wrote in the spring, "it will not be because we have not done our best

to cause it, by doing nothing at all."[1] That was exactly what the French government did to save the great fortress whose loss insured the loss of Canada.

On July 26, 1758, Louisburg surrendered, and the entire garrison became prisoners of war.[2] Forts Duquesne and Frontenac were also captured, and though Montcalm's genius preserved Ticonderoga, this could not long avail against the English colonists, unstintingly supported by the English army and the English fleet.

The calamities of the year led to the disgrace of the amiable abbé, who had helped to form an alliance that proved so unsuccessful. Frederick's victories in 1757 convinced Bernis that the confederation against him would result in failure, and the disasters of the following year increased his despondency. He became a prophet of evil, and the rôle of a Cassandra is never popular. If his opinion of the government, of which he formed a part, was unfavorable, it was none the less just. "We have neither generals nor ministers," he wrote; "and if we had any, would they be given a place? It is not the condition of affairs that alarms me, but the incapacity of those who conduct them. . . . Our soldiers are willing, but our officers are unworthy to serve; they all desire repose and indolence and money. . . . The very stones cry out against the administration of the marine. . . . It is an abyss of disorder, and all who belong to it steal from force of

[1] Bernis to Choiseul, February 28, 1758.

[2] The story of the capture of Louisburg and of the Seven Years' war in America has been told by Parkman with such accuracy, fullness, and dramatic force, that nothing can be added or taken away. That chapter of history has been so written as to need no rewriting.

ancient habit."[1] "Neither we nor our allies know how to carry on war," he said, and from this fact he drew the just conclusion that it was necessary to abandon the idea "of dividing the skin of the bear who knows how to defend himself much better than we know how to attack him."[2]

Bernis was not afraid to advance these views to those to whom they would surely be unwelcome. "A better administration is the only remedy for the evils the state suffers," he wrote Mme. de Pompadour, "and peace is necessary."[3] "The obstinacy of the court of Vienna in continuing the war will exhaust the kingdom," he told the king. As for himself, he said that he was dishonored and discredited, and he asked leave to resign his position.

His advice met with no favorable response. "I do not wish to change the system which I have adopted," the king replied, "nor even that any one should suggest it."[4] Bernis was allowed to retire, but not on the terms of continued favor for which he hoped. A cardinal's hat had been secured for him in the days of his prosperity, and he received it in the autumn of 1758; soon after, his resignation as secretary for foreign affairs was accepted, and a few days later the king in a curt note informed the cardinal that he had not shown himself worthy of the confidence he had enjoyed, nor of the favors he had received, and he was bidden to leave the court within

[1] Bernis to Stainville, December 13, 1757; January 25, March 17, April 21, 1758.

[2] *Ib.*, April 16 and September 23.

[3] Bernis to Pompadour, September 26.

[4] Louis to Bernis, October, 1758.

forty-eight hours.[1] His imprudent actions caused his rise, and his judicious views caused his disgrace, said Frederick.[2]

The fallen minister took his overthrow with the amiable philosophy that was part of his character; he led a life of tranquil and somewhat luxurious dignity, for which he was better fitted than contending against the genius of Frederick or the persistence of Maria Theresa. He was in time made an archbishop, and he was sent as minister to Rome; for over a quarter of a century the French embassy under his charge was a centre for cultivated gayety that travelers from all Europe delighted to visit; he was influential in the conclaves as in society, and was called the Warwick, the Pope-maker of the cardinal's college.[3] A mild, amiable, ingenious, not very profound man, he chanced for a while to play a great political part, and he lived to see the entire overthrow of the monarchy whose prestige was dimmed by the war he helped to begin.

[1] Louis to Bernis, December 13. The letter of dismissal, so often printed, belongs to the voluminous apocryphal literature of this period. "Your empty head has not been able to sustain the weight of my benefits. Go to your abbey, and serve as an example of ingrates." This was not the style adopted in Louis XV.'s correspondence. The genuine letter is attached to Bernis's *Memoirs*.

[2] *Œuvres*, iv. 225.

[3] In his diocese of Albi, Bernis was much beloved by clergy and laity; he gave liberally to the poor, and his parishioners blessed his name. *Mém. de Georgel*, i. 133.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FAILURE OF THE COMBINATION.

Bernis's successor, like the abbé himself, owed his promotion to the favor of Mme. de Pompadour. He was, however, a man of considerable parts; compared with the mediocrities who held important office in the later years of Louis XV.'s reign, he almost seems a great man.

The Count of Stainville was by birth a subject of the Duke of Lorraine who married Maria Theresa, but he early entered the service of France; trained to arms, he was not unfit for courts, and he became known in the most polished circles as a man of ready wit and charming manners. The count was well born, but he was poor; he married a lady whose pedigree was not ancient, and whose wealth was immense. She was a granddaughter of Crozat, the famous financier under Louis XIV., who lent millions to the government, and was the predecessor of Law's company as proprietor of Louisiana. Stainville had now wealth to assist him, wit he never lacked, and he made friends who helped him as much as his talents or his money.

He was among the first of the great nobles who associated themselves with the philosophical school; the count saw in Voltaire and the Encyclopædists, not only the dispensers of future fame, but men who would greatly influence present opinion; the friendship of philosophers and poets did much to gain for

their patron a popularity which neither mistakes nor the loss of court favor affected. A friend, even more potent than the wits, he found in Mme. de Pompadour, whom he amused by his conversation and pleased by his flatteries, and to whose fortunes he always remained faithful.

Stainville was sent as minister to Rome, where he showed ability as a diplomat and a marked disinclination to be a mouthpiece of the Jesuits. In 1756, he was chosen as ambassador to Vienna, and there he gained the confidence of Maria Theresa, while increasing his favor with Mme. de Pompadour. He was made Duke of Choiseul. In November, 1758, he was recalled from Vienna to become secretary of state for foreign affairs, and during the twelve years following, he exercised a greater influence than any other man in French politics.

The new minister was an earnest advocate of the Austrian alliance; his relations with the court of Vienna were amicable and intimate, he was the friend of Kaunitz, he had received many marks of attention from Maria Theresa, he succeeded to Bernis's position because the cardinal had become faint-hearted in the cause and the duke was known to be zealous. His accession to power was followed by a new treaty of alliance, which secured more for Austria and less for France than either of the treaties that had preceded it. In March, 1759, the third treaty of Versailles was signed. The subsidy given Austria was somewhat reduced, for France was no longer able to make the payments she had once promised; but she bound herself to keep an army of one hundred thousand men in the field, and to make no peace without the coöperation of Austria. By the treaty of 1757, at least the

possibility of advantage had been secured France, but by the present agreement she had not even the hope of reward; Austria now, as formerly, refused to take any part in the war against England, while it was again agreed that the allies would make every exertion to procure Silesia and Glatz for Maria Theresa; the cessions in the Netherlands, which had formed the consideration for the former agreement to recover the lost provinces of the empress queen, were no longer spoken of; neither France nor even Louis's son-in-law was to receive a foot of land; the only compensation which Louis XV. obtained for sending one hundred thousand men to fight the battles of Maria Theresa was the promise that the Austrian archduke should marry the French king's granddaughter. The promise was fulfilled, and this was all that France gained by the Seven Years' war.[1] "The advantages of this treaty," said Kaunitz, "are decidedly on our side, and we have good reason to be content with it."[2]

The fourth year of the war began with the confederation against Frederick still firmly knit together, and the persistence of his enemies began to exhaust his powers of resistance. The French armies, however, were unimportant factors in the campaign of 1759. France, which, fifty years before, had contended almost alone against half of Europe, was now a less important member of the alliance than either Austria or Russia. Under the command of Contades and Broglie the French army advanced against Prince Ferdinand, and for a while it met with some success.

[1] The two treaties signed at this time are published by Schäfer. Certain advantages were also secured for the Spanish infante in Italy.

[2] Kaunitz to Starhemberg, May 27, 1759.

In April, 1759, Broglie won a battle of no great importance at Bergen, and Frankfort and Münster fell into the hands of the French. Long months of manœuvring followed. On August 1, the battle of Minden was fought; it was obstinate and bloody, and the French were completely defeated, with a loss of over eight thousand men. Their army suffered, as was often the case, from the jealousies of its commanders. Contades and Broglie charged each other with the blame, and both probably viewed a disaster with more complacency than the triumph of a rival. The greatest of military authorities has decided that the fault was that of Broglie. He was ill affected and jealous of his superior, says Napoleon, and his indecision and slowness were responsible for the defeat.[1]

The condition of the French army was bad, the soldiers expected to be beaten, and this anticipation helped to bring about the result; but the explanation for years of defeat is chiefly to be found in the inefficiency of those who commanded. The evils existing among the French officers have been alluded to, and they did not diminish as the war went on. Doubtless they could have been remedied if a resolute man had been at the head of the service. But France had neither a Pitt nor a Louvois. Belle Isle did what he could, but he was an old man, broken-hearted by the loss of a son who gave promise of unusual military talents, combined with an elevation of character still more unusual; worst of all, Mme. de Pompadour was at the head, and no one could

[1] *Précis sur les campagnes de Frédéric.* This was the view taken by Belle Isle, the minister of war, as appears in his letters to Contades.

expect that wastefulness would be checked or merit be recognized by her.[1]

Marshal Estrées was sent to the army after the disaster of Minden to see what could be done to improve its condition, and his letters tell of the evils he found. The soldiers were tired, he said, of laborious marches undertaken with small hopes of accomplishing any result; they were chagrined by repeated defeats; what was required for their comfort had been lost or captured. As a natural result, they were discontented, and their complaints of their leaders often passed all bounds.[2] Nothing could be expected from an ill-equipped, ill-officered army; the French lost town after town, until it was time to go into winter quarters.

When Choiseul took the place of the disheartened Bernis, he marked his accession to power, not only by a new treaty, but by new and more vigorous plans of warfare. It may be doubted if the scheme that received the most attention was not more ambitious than wise.

During 1758, the French had been harassed by repeated invasions. These expeditions of the English along the coast accomplished no important results, and were irritating rather than exhausting, but they excited a strong desire for reprisals. Such was the superiority of the English fleets in America and India that there was now little hope for French success in those quarters. Choiseul resolved, therefore, to undertake once more the scheme of an invasion of England,

[1] Walpole said of the Count of Gisors that he showed more application to improve himself than any young Frenchman of quality he ever saw. Walpole to Mann, July 8, 1758.

[2] Estrées to the king, August 26, 1759.

which had been so often formed in the past and so often abandoned. This time it was seriously undertaken, for the new minister was an energetic man, and the preparations were neither so inadequate nor so speedily abandoned as had usually been the case. It was resolved to make a landing with no less than fifty thousand men, and transports were to carry them. Concealment was impossible, and the fears of an invasion, which had so often disturbed the English, this time were not without foundation; volunteer regiments marched and drilled; fleets patrolled the Channel; the nation was up in arms. There was certainly little chance for fifty thousand men to cross the Channel and effect a landing while the English had the stronger fleet; but even if the transports had escaped Hawke's vigilance, the soldiers would have been destined to a lamentable defeat. Mme. de Pompadour doomed the expedition to failure, if by any chance it got under way: the command of the army which was to conquer England was given to Soubise, whose irresolution and incapacity were the jest of every soldier.

He had no opportunity to display his lack of military qualities, for the superiority of the British navy blighted Choiseul's plans in the bud. In August, 1759, the French fleet set sail from Toulon to join the ships gathered at Brest. It was overtaken on the way by Admiral Boscawen and destroyed; some ships were sunk at sea after obstinate fighting, some took refuge on the coast of Portugal and were burned by the English, and the others lost their way and put into Cadiz.

Notwithstanding this great calamity, Choiseul persevered in his undertaking; late in the autumn, the fleet gathered at Brest put to sea in the hope of de-

feating Hawke and preparing the way for the transports. They were soon compelled to retreat before superior numbers, and took refuge in Quiberon Bay. There they were closely followed by the English squadron under Hawke; it was late in November, a severe storm was raging, and the two fleets were in a narrow bay, full of shoals and reefs. All this did not check Hawke's attack; the battle which ensued resulted in the destruction of the French fleet, and after this calamity, the last hope of a successful invasion of England was destroyed. Not only were the Brest and Toulon fleets practically destroyed, but the English were victorious all over the world, from Canada to Madras. In India, Aché and the ships under his command sailed away from Pondicherri and left Lally to his fate; in America, Quebec was captured by Wolfe, and Canada became English. Guadeloupe was taken in the West Indies, and Gorée on the African coast. "It will soon be as shameful to beat a Frenchman as to beat a woman," cried an Englishman in his exultation. "Our bells," wrote Walpole, "are worn threadbare with ringing for victories."

Few Te Deums for victories on land or sea were sung in France during these years; there had been no period of defeat and disaster like this since the days of Crécy and Poitiers. In the war of the Spanish Succession France had suffered severely, but she had contended almost single-handed against the most of Europe, and there had been no such disgraceful defeat as Rossbach, no such calamities as the loss of India and America.

Such results do not occur without a cause, and the primary cause for the decline of French power was bad government. Financial distress in France and

the superiority of the British navy are said to explain the loss of India and America, but it would not have been impossible for the French to have had a treasury that was full and a navy that was well equipped. The population of France was about twenty millions; it was almost three times that of the British Isles and four times that of Prussia. This population, compared with the other Continental states, was a rich one. While the condition of the peasantry was usually bad, yet this was chiefly due to the unfair proportion of taxation which fell upon them, and to unwise economical laws which hampered the sale of their products; among other classes in the community wealth had increased with rapidity, and if the war checked this prosperity, it did not destroy it.

The growth in the amounts received from taxation, which had been apparent under Fleury, continued under subsequent administrations. In 1742, the farms realized ninety-one million livres; in 1749, after seven years of war, they produced one hundred and one millions; in 1755, they reached one hundred and ten millions.[1] New taxes contributed in very slight degree to this improvement, and it is doubtful if the profits of the farmers-general were any less than in the past; the gain was the sure measure of a rapid growth in wealth, and of a larger business activity.

The increase in the consumption of salt tells the same story. A larger use of this staple could result only from an increasing population and increasing prosperity. From 1709, the darkest period of the war of the Spanish Succession, to the close of Fleury's administration, the increase was fifty per cent.; dur-

[1] *Baux des fermes*, 1749–80.

ing the following twenty years, notwithstanding two disastrous wars, the increase was over twelve per cent., to be followed by still another increase of twelve per cent. in the ten years following the peace of Paris. The consumption of salt doubled during the reign of Louis XV.[1]

The sums obtained from the French people by taxation considerably exceeded those paid by their opponents. It seemed an enormous effort when the English Parliament in 1758, in answer to Pitt's demands, voted twelve million pounds for the expense of the war, but in the same year the amount received by the French government from taxation was very nearly as large, and to this we must add the profits of the farmers in whose hands the collection of taxes was placed; even under a bad system the nation furnished money sufficient to equip a navy equal to that of England and an army equal to that of Prussia. For the failure to do either, inefficient administration is the only explanation. "The industry of the nation," said Voltaire, "repairs the mistakes of the government."[2] This might be true so far as the wealth of the country was concerned, but national industry could not atone for governmental inefficiency in the prosecution of the war. The French navy was beaten on every sea, because the money required to strengthen it was either wasted by ill administration, or spent in the prosecution of a war against Frederick, in which France had now nothing to gain.

Though the sums expended on the navy were small when compared with the cost of the army, yet they

[1] There were some obligatory purchases of salt, but the figures of these are not important.

[2] Letter of February 8, 1760.

were considerable. If they had been wisely used, the French would not have suffered the disasters that overwhelmed them in every part of the world. In 1757, sixty million livres were allowed the navy department, besides thirty millions for the colonies.[1] For the period these sums were large; doubtless more was needed to preserve the foreign empire of France, but the fault was in the application of the money rather than in the insufficiency of the amount. The department of the marine, wrote one of the ministry, was a chaos of abuses; there was no system of accounting, there was no order, the principles of administration were erroneous, and honesty was almost unknown.[2]

When such a system defied any efforts at its reformation, we feel no surprise at the unbroken record of French disasters. It was not that brave and able men were lacking; in India, Dupleix was the equal of Clive; in America, no one displayed military or political talents superior to those of Montcalm; most of the officers of the navy did the best that was possible with the material that was furnished them: the root of the evil was at Versailles.

In the campaign of 1760, the French army by the Rhine was over one hundred thousand strong, while Prince Ferdinand had about seventy thousand men to oppose them, yet at the end of the year the armies were very nearly in the same relative position as at its

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, xvi. 33 *et seq.* Clamageran makes these amounts somewhat smaller, and any figures as to French finances are only approximate. If ministers at the heads of departments could not ascertain at the time how much they were expending, it is useless for investigators a century and a half later to hope that they can attain to accuracy.

[2] Letters of Bernis to Choiseul, *pas.*; to the king, October 18, 1758.

beginning. Broglie was the French commander, and though the results of the campaign were not important, at least he escaped any disgraceful defeat, and gained a partial victory at Kloster Kamp.

These unimportant successes were far from compensating for the defeats suffered in other parts of the world. The English completed the conquest of Canada, and in September, 1760, the capitulation was signed by which that country was formally surrendered to England. In India the campaign was equally disastrous; the French were defeated in the decisive battle of Wandewash, Pondicherri was besieged, and in January, 1761, the capital of French India surrendered; it was the end of the French empire in the East.

In the mean time the struggle for Frederick's overthrow, in which France lavished the resources she needed elsewhere, continued year after year, but the stubborn determination of Maria Theresa was not seconded by corresponding vigor on the part of her generals or her allies. Though the heart of the czarina was in the combination against Frederick, she did not second her desires for the ruin of the Prussian king by the measures necessary to effect it. The Russian army was large, but so slow were its movements that it was less formidable than it seemed. Nominally Frederick had to contend with forces twice as large as his own, but in fact he was able to deal with the Austrian and the Russian armies separately. If it had been possible to induce the Russians to winter near the seat of war, they could have been ready to take part in the campaign early in the year, but each autumn their generals insisted on retiring to the Vistula, and it was June before the army again appeared to take part in

a slack campaign of three or four months. It took so long to come from the Vistula to the Oder, that hardly had they reached their destination when they began to think it was nearly time to start on the march back.[1]

Only by reason of this dilatory prosecution of the league against him was Frederick able to avert the hour of doom until the czarina's death rescued him from danger. If the Russian and Austrian army had joined in a combined movement, it is doubtful if he could have continued the war during two campaigns.[2]

In 1759, Frederick had about one hundred and thirty thousand men with whom to oppose two hundred thousand Austrians and Russians. But the Russian army had spent the winter three hundred miles from Silesia, and when the cold weather ceased it made its way to the field with the deliberation of an ill-organized force, led by indolent generals. Daun waited for the arrival of the Russians before he would take any active steps, and it was late in June when the northern cohorts approached the Oder.[3] Frederick at once sent a force to repulse them, but this year was for him a season of calamity. An attack made at Kay late in July was repulsed with a loss of five thousand men, and on August 12, the Prussian army, commanded by Frederick himself, came up with the Russians at Kunersdorf. A great battle ensued; the Prussians were inferior in numbers, and the Russians fought stubbornly; Frederick lost half of his army, and the remnants were scattered in every direction. Had the

[1] Laudon to Daun, August 17, 1759; Daun to Maria Theresa; *Précis de Napoleon*, 317.

[2] *Précis de Napoleon, Bib. de l'Armée*, iii. 339.

[3] Laudon to Daun, August 17, 1759; Arneth, *Maria Theresia*, t. vi.

Russians been commanded by an energetic general, it is probable that the war would have ended within six months. Such was Frederick's own opinion; if they had known how to profit by their victory, he said, it would have been the end of the Prussians.[1] "I have had two horses killed under me," he wrote, the night after the battle, "and it is my misfortune that I still live myself. . . . Of an army of forty-eight thousand men I have only three thousand left. . . . I have no more resources and, not to lie about it, I think all is lost."[2] Frederick was so shattered in body and mind that he turned over the command to a subordinate, but he was soon himself again, and abandoned thoughts of suicide for endeavors to retrieve his fortunes. The Prussian king was often defeated during the Seven Years' war, but he never encountered a general who knew how to utilize victory; when fortune deserted Frederick, the mistakes of his adversaries proved his salvation.[3] While he was rapidly gathering the remnant of a routed army, enlisting recruits, replacing the cannon he had lost, and preparing for new encounters, Soltikof, the Russian commander, contented himself with reflecting on the glory he had won, and this was all he did during what remained of the season for operations. It was in vain that Daun urged him to follow up his victory, and declared that the allied armies, acting together against Frederick while he was crippled by defeat, could complete his overthrow. Pleas for an active campaign sounded strangely from

[1] *Hist. de la guerre*, ii. 312.

[2] Frederick to Finckenstein, August 12, 1759.

[3] "Nos affaires sont affreuses, mais l'ennemi me laisse du temps. Peut-être pourrais-je par ses fautes me sauver." *Ib.*, August 16.

Daun, the most deliberate in his movements of living generals, and they met with no favorable response from Soltikof. The Russians, he said, were only allies, and the war was waged for the benefit of Maria Theresa; yet his army had fought two bloody battles and won two great victories, while the Austrians had done nothing at all; it was now time for them to exert themselves in the cause; as for his own men, they were exhausted and needed rest, and he proposed to give it to them. He kept his word; his forces attempted nothing further of importance; in October they started on their march to the Vistula, and there they spent the winter.[1]

It was late in the summer of 1759 before the Austrians began active operations, but their campaign, when at last undertaken, was a prosperous one. In September, Dresden was forced to surrender, and Frederick never again had the satisfaction of using the capital of the Elector of Saxony as a base of operations in a war against that prince and his allies. He hoped to recapture the city, but his efforts were brought to naught by a still more serious disaster. An army corps under Finck was detached to harass Daun in his operations; they were hemmed in by the Austrians at Maxen and forced to surrender; five hundred officers and twelve thousand soldiers laid down their arms and became prisoners of war.

At the time, Frederick seems to have regarded Finck as unfortunate rather than culpable, but after the war had ended, Finck was tried by court-martial, censured, and punished, and the king refused to miti-

[1] "Ma grosse tête bénite de Daun ne remue ni pied ni patte; il attend sur Fernor qui attend sur je ne sais quoi." Frederick to Dohna, June 18, 1759.

gate the penalty.[1] The blow was a serious one to his plans, and long rankled in his mind. "If we have to succumb at last," he wrote a year later, "our ruin will date from that infamous affair of Maxen." [2]

The year 1759 closed in gloom. In the following year it was with difficulty that Frederick could put one hundred and twenty thousand men in the field, while earlier in the war he had nearly two hundred thousand men under arms.[3] Not only were they reduced in numbers, but the superiority of the Prussian army in quality had been greatly lessened. In the bloody battles of four years, and by such calamities as the surrender at Maxen and the defeat at Kunersdorf, terrible gaps were made in the ranks of the veterans who had been the admiration of Europe.[4] The king had to fill the depleted regiments with untrained boys, and Prussia was much in the condition of France at the close of the Napoleonic wars; the veterans had perished, and their place was taken by youths gathered by a merciless conscription. It was with good reason that Frederick looked with dismay on the campaign that was now to begin; his means were exhausted, his resources were gone, and he declared that in all probability he could not continue the contest longer than July.[5]

These gloomy anticipations were not fulfilled. "The king of Prussia," wrote the English minister, "is reduced to the fatal necessity of depending upon the

[1] Frederick to Finckenstein, November 26, 1759, and letters following.

[2] *Ib.*, to Prince Henry, October 3, 1760.

[3] *Pol. Cor.*, xix. 177.

[4] "La bonté intrinsèque des troupes baisse à vue d'œil," Frederick wrote to Prince Ferdinand, January 25, 1760.

[5] *Pol. Cor.*, xix. 1, 48, *et pas.*

faults and blunders of his enemies," but of these, as he truly added, "there has been great store." [1] They were as plentiful in the fifth year of the war as in the first, and the king escaped the ruin which he had good cause to expect.

The Austrians began the campaign with somewhat more vigor than was their custom; by May, their forces were in movement, and in June, Laudon, their ablest general, secured an important advantage. He succeeded in surrounding an army corps, under La Motte Fouqué, and forcing them to surrender. Eight thousand men laid down their arms; almost one tenth of Frederick's army fit for service was lost at a single blow. This calamity was followed by the capture of Glatz, which was regarded as the key of Silesia. "I should like to hang myself," the king wrote his brother, "but we must act the play to the end." [2] That end he looked forward to with little hope, but in these days of evil fortune he never faltered in one resolution, — he would die rather than cede one foot of land; as for indemnity in money, he said, they could make him promise it, but all Europe could not collect it.[3] Deserted cities, burned hamlets, and untilled fields gave little promise that a great war indemnity could be collected from them. "I have nothing to hope," he wrote during the summer, "from war or politics. . . . There remains only the chance of arms, and this is a question of perishing four weeks sooner or later. Whether it comes in August, September, or October, is all the same to me." [4]

[1] Mitchell to Holderness, February 12, 1760.
[2] Frederick to Prince Henry, June 26, 1760.
[3] *Ib.*, to Knyphausen, January 16.
[4] *Ib.*, to Finckenstein, July 27.

These periods of depression were not continuous in a mind as mobile as that of Frederick, and even while they lasted, they neither diminished his activity nor weakened his resolution. Daun pursued him with eighty thousand men, while the Prussians had less than forty thousand. It seemed that the final catastrophe, which Frederick had so often predicted, must now come, but he marched and countermarched, and baffled Daun's slow and careful movements. His own manœuvres have been criticised as highly perilous, but as he said, his condition was so desperate that he could no longer regard principles of tactics or rules of warfare. He had to take his chances, and trust to the favor of fortune and the incapacity of his adversaries.[1] It was to these combined that he now owed his salvation.

Daun had resolved on a battle, and Laudon with thirty thousand men marched to take Frederick in the flank, while the main army was to attack him in front. But the Prussian king foresaw this manœuvre, and on the night of August 14, he abandoned his camp at Liegnitz; the camp-fires were left burning and the sentinels continued their walks and their calls, that Daun might not suspect his movements. The troops then marched rapidly in the darkness of the night, and when Laudon, who had also been marching all the night, came to the heights of Pfaffendorf, he soon found to his consternation that he had the whole Prussian army to deal with. It was impossible to fall back, and he hoped that Daun would soon come to the rescue from the other side. At three in the morning of August 15, the battle began, and by five o'clock, Laudon had been routed with a loss of ten thousand

[1] *Précis de Napoleon*, 1760; *Pol. Cor.*, xix., *pas.*

men. The main Austrian army was only six miles from the place of battle, but the wind blew from their camp, and the roar of the artillery was unheard; only when it was too late did Daun discover that he had a deserted camp in front of him, that his lieutenant had been routed, and the opportunity for a concerted movement was gone. Frederick lost only seventeen hundred men, he made his escape in triumph, and joined his forces to those of Prince Henry. "This is the first good news for a year," he wrote his ally King George.[1]

Frederick's victory at Liegnitz disconcerted all the plans of his enemies. It was July, 1760, before the Russians arrived at Posen, and when they reached there, they were much perplexed what to do next. The Austrians wished them to coöperate with their own forces, to winter near by, and to bring the war to a speedy end. Any possibility of persuading the Russians to adopt so judicious a course was destroyed by the disaster of Liegnitz; Soltikof was apprehensive of a repulse, and occupied himself with profitless marching and countermarching. At last a movement was decided on which held out a prospect of plunder without the danger of fighting a battle. In September a strong detachment of Russians, with some twenty thousand Austrians, advanced upon Berlin. The Prussians had no forces to spare for its defense; on the 9th of October, the Russian army took possession of Frederick's capital; the city escaped plunder by paying a great fine, but arsenals and military supplies were destroyed, and the royal palaces at Charlottenburg and Schönhausen were pillaged by Cossack and Saxon troopers.

[1] *Pol. Cor.*, xix. 544. The battle of Liegnitz is described in Frederick's correspondence and memoirs, and by Arneth from the Austrian official reports.

This was irritating, and Prussia could ill afford to lose either money or supplies, but such an inroad had little effect on the result of the war. After three days' possession of Berlin, the Russians evacuated the city, fell back on the Oder, and erelong marched away beyond the Vistula. Frederick soon gained an advantage which more than compensated for the annoyance he suffered from this predatory expedition. On November 3, he attacked the Austrians under Daun at Torgau. At two in the afternoon, the battle began, and it raged for over seven hours; the attack on one side, led by Frederick himself, was repulsed; at half past seven, the Austrians seemed to be the victors. Daun received the congratulations of his officers, and sent off a dispatch to Vienna announcing his success. But the attack continued from the other side of the battlefield; Daun had been wounded, and the Austrians lost the benefit of his careful and skillful generalship;[1] the men fought on in the darkness; when the firing ceased, it was past nine, and it was impossible to distinguish friend from foe, but the Prussians were in possession of the field, and the Austrians fell back, in good order, but defeated. The battle had been one of the bloodiest in the war: twenty thousand Austrians had fallen or been taken prisoners, and sixteen thousand Prussians; one fourth of the men engaged were either killed or wounded. "I have been in fifteen battles," said Frederick, "and this was the most severe." It was also the last he ever fought.[2]

He had gained the moral effect of a victory, and

[1] "Il est apparent que sa blessure nous a facilité le gain de la bataille," says the official Prussian report.

[2] Full accounts of the battle of Torgau are found in *Pol. Cor.*, t. xx. See, also, Arneth, t. vi.

this was much, but it had been dearly bought, and he knew that the losses of such an engagement weakened him more than his adversaries. "We have got a respite of seven months," he wrote, "from November to June; this is the whole fruit of the toils, the dangers, the infinite pains, which this rude and cruel campaign has cost us." [1]

Frederick had begun the war with hopes of bringing it to a speedy and successful termination. These had been disappointed; as defeats became more frequent, his armies diminished in numbers and deteriorated in quality, and his kingdom, poor at the beginning, was exhausted by the cost and ravages of a long war, he felt that in a speedy peace was his only hope. No matter how desperate was his condition, he never wavered in his determination to yield nothing, but it was plain that if the war continued it must at last result in the overthrow of Prussia; the king might fall on the battlefield or end his troubles with a dose of poison, but his reign would mark the ruin of the House of Brandenburg.

It was therefore with feverish interest that he watched any indication of a desire for peace. Maria Theresa had a grim tenacity of purpose equal to his own; if there remained a possibility of success, she would wage war longer than the Greeks did against Troy, to humble the adversary who had wronged her, to win back the provinces of which she had been despoiled. The czarina had no such interest in the result, but she had little to lose by the war; though she used with little vigor the resources of her empire, yet there was small hope that in her lifetime Russia would abandon the cause of Maria Theresa. But

[1] Frederick to Finckenstein, November 6, 1760.

the French had much to lose and nothing to gain, and they had met with almost unbroken ill success: their great possessions in America and India were gone, their finances were in hopeless confusion; no brilliant battles, no great victories, had excited popular enthusiasm and created a glamour of glory to conceal the pressure of taxation; the nation was weary of a war begun without motive, prosecuted without ability, and sure to end in disgrace. During the winter of 1759, there were some efforts at negotiations, which came to nothing, but as the campaign of 1760 closed, with Frederick still unconquered, the French ministers again sought to plead the cause of peace.

When Choiseul succeeded to Bernis's position, he had been eager for a vigorous prosecution of the war. Two years of the responsibilities of offices and a closer insight into the hopeless confusion, the boundless corruption, in which the French administration was involved, had modified his views. The financial condition of the country might have discouraged a man of even more sanguine temperament than Choiseul. The annual deficit was now two hundred million livres, and this could only be met by loans, of which the terms steadily became more unfavorable. Nearly one half of the receipts of the government were absorbed by interest charges, and by the compensation of offices which had been alienated to secure advances.[1] For a short period it was thought that relief could be obtained by the ingenuity of a financier, but this hope soon proved delusive.

[1] In 1759, the receipts, as stated by Silhouette, amounted to five hundred million livres, on which the charges were two hundred and eighty-six millions, and the deficit was estimated at two hundred and seventeen millions.

In the spring of 1759, Silhouette was made comptroller general, and he signaled his entry into power by a variety of new devices. By one of the many curious anomalies of the government, the king himself held an interest in the profits made by the farmers-general from the farm of the taxes; in other words, the king in this way received a certain portion of the sums gained at the expense of the royal treasury. Silhouette decided to offer this interest for sale, and from it he realized something over seventy million francs. In reality such a transaction was only an additional loan at six per cent., but it was so complicated by the operations of the treasury and the tax farmers that it seemed as if the new comptroller had relieved present needs by some process of legerdemain. He was hailed as an extraordinary man. "God has sent M. de Silhouette to our rescue," wrote Voltaire. "If there is any good remedy, he will discover it. . . . We must find for him a niche in the temple of fame by the side of Colbert."[1]

The public enthusiasm was short-lived; financial shifts could not long bridge over an increasing deficit, and Silhouette proposed to remedy this by various new taxes. Among his other schemes was a plan for subjecting bachelors to a capitation three times as heavy as that of married men. He attempted, also, some reductions in the pension list and in the expenses of the court, but these aroused the hostility of all whose interests were affected. His operations in the farms had already excited the distrust of the farmers-general, and it was impossible for any comptroller to hold his place, against whom were arrayed the courtiers and the financiers. In November, Sil-

[1] Letters of May 26 and June 18, 1759.

houette was removed, after eight months in office. His fame faded as rapidly as it had grown; those who had recognized in him a Colbert now saw in him only a charlatan; whatever was empty and superficial was called after him, and thus only his name has survived to posterity as the appellation still given to the representation of a shadow.

Choiseul, like Bernis, now recognized the hopeless condition in which France was plunged, and was desirous of some arrangement by which peace could be obtained. Already he had declared that the campaign of 1760 must be the last in which France could take part. "What do you want me to do?" he said angrily to the Austrian ambassador. "We have neither money, nor resources, nor a navy, nor soldiers, nor generals, nor brains, nor ministers."[1] As the year ended in disaster, he grew more strenuous in his demands on the empress queen to accede to some terms of peace. France, he wrote, was exhausted and could do no more, and what had been accomplished by the great coalition in five years of bloody warfare? They had not even driven Frederick from Saxony, which he had seized; Berlin had indeed been put to ransom, Silesia harried, Glatz captured, and the remote province of Prussia occupied by the Russians; with so sorry results for so great exertions, it was time to consider the situation calmly, and abandon designs that it was impossible to execute.

Suggestions for a humiliating peace met with the same reception from Maria Theresa that a proposal to cede Silesia would have found with Frederick. The French ambassador, whose ill fortune it was to present these disagreeable reflections, met a most chilly

[1] Starhemberg, August 28, 1760, cited by Arneth.

reception. "All that this means," said the empress, who neither could nor cared to conceal her anger, "is that France is going to make an alliance with the king of Prussia."

She was wrong in her surmise. Choiseul was a man who changed his policy with rapidity; the quickness of his mind made him susceptible to new impressions and mobile in his views. Having advocated peace in vain, he now promised that France would carry on war with renewed vigor, and he was true to his word. The spring of 1761 saw one hundred and sixty thousand French soldiers beyond the Rhine, — a force which, led by a Turenne, would have been enough to conquer Germany.[1] It was led by Soubise, and Prussia remained unconquered.

In 1760, the French army was commanded by Marshal Broglie, and if it met with no signal successes, it suffered no disgraceful defeat. Broglie was a man of jealous and insubordinate character, but he was a soldier of ability, far superior to courtier generals like Soubise and Clermont, and he had the confidence of his men. But he was no favorite at court. Mme. de Pompadour was resolved to obtain for her protégé another opportunity to win military glory; at her request, and to the great detriment of the service, the French army was now divided into two commands, of which the larger was given to Soubise and the smaller to Broglie. Prince Ferdinand had only eighty thousand men with which to oppose them; the odds against him were fully as great as against Frederick, nor was there any superiority in the quality of his troops which would counterbalance this discrepancy in numbers. During five years of war the condition and the dis-

[1] *Précis de Napoleon* for 1761.

cipline of the French forces on land had improved, and they were at least equal to their adversaries; the cavalry was well mounted and well disciplined, the artillery excellent, the infantry respectable, and the engineer corps the best in Europe.[1] Great bodies of well-equipped men are useless on the field of battle unless they have skillful leaders, and an amiable and inefficient general like Soubise would have been beaten if he had commanded Frederick's army in its best estate. The conduct of the Prince of Soubise in this campaign, said Napoleon, showed his absolute incapacity even more than the battle of Rossbach. Ferdinand had little trouble in playing with the two armies into which the French forces were divided. At last, in July, 1761, Broglie's troops joined those under Soubise. Broglie was popular in the army, and as he rode along the ranks of Soubise's command, he was greeted with applause. It was a questionable compliment to their own commander, but Soubise was as polite as he was incompetent. "You see," he said to Broglie, "how my army receives you," and he drew back a little that his associate might be in full view of all the soldiers.[2]

Affairs went none the better for so much politeness. The two generals prepared to attack Ferdinand at Vellinghausen, and the 16th of July was fixed for the action; but on the afternoon of the 15th, the wing commanded by Broglie came up with the enemy, began the attack, and succeeded in driving them from their position. The marshal sent to Soubise for reinforcements to hold what he had gained, and asked him to begin the attack on the other wing at early dawn. The prince was not pleased that his associate

[1] *Précis de Napoleon.* [2] *Mém. de Bezenval.*

should snatch the credit of a victory from him, and moreover his timidity, his irresolution, and his inefficiency rendered it difficult for him to make any rapid movements; he had ordered the attack to begin at a later hour, and it was not easy for him at ten at night to prepare for an attack by dawn. Early in the morning, Ferdinand attacked Broglie with great vigor; by the time Soubise was ready to take any part his associate was in full retreat, and accordingly he retreated himself. The French had at least one hundred and twenty thousand men, and were defeated by one half that number, with a loss of six thousand; Broglie's command alone had done any fighting; the forces under Soubise retired from the battlefield, having lost in killed only twenty-four men.[1]

If there had been little zeal shown in fighting, much was displayed in recrimination. Soubise charged Broglie with disobedience of orders, and with beginning the battle prematurely. Broglie charged Soubise with betraying him, and with refusing to come to his aid. The public sided with Broglie, and declared that Mme. de Pompadour's favorite had exposed the French army to defeat rather than disturb himself by getting up early in the morning. Among those who took part in the engagement was a young officer who was destined to become a more famous general than either Broglie or Soubise, and he has given us his judgment on his superiors. The battle was lost, he says, by the haste of Broglie, who attacked too soon in order to gain all the glory, and by the jealousy of Soubise, who sacrificed the honor of France to the criminal pleasure of mortifying a rival.[2]

[1] For this battle, see *Mémoires historiques* from Boncet, and the English reports, *Mém. de Bezenval*, etc.

[2] *Mém. de Dumouriez.*

This criticism is perhaps too harsh. Broglie was impatient, but doubtless he felt that he could rely on the support of the rest of the army to hold any advantage he might win. Soubise was too amiable a man actually to plan the defeat of a rival; the lack of ability to handle large bodies of men, annoyance at having to form new plans, and a certain degree of jealousy at the vigor of his too enterprising associate accounted for the slowness of his movements; there was more incapacity than ill will, but the result was the same.

The two marshals could not serve together, and the army was again divided. Neither of them accomplished anything, and at the close of the year 1761, Prince Ferdinand had successfully thwarted the efforts of forces twice as numerous as his own; the great army of one hundred and sixty thousand men which the French government had put in the field had accomplished nothing.

The campaign carried on by the Austrians and Russians against Frederick was more fruitful. No great battle was fought, the Prussian king suffered no great defeat, but exhaustion was doing its work, and the time was fast approaching when Frederick could resist no more. In Saxony there was little change, and Daun remained there in a torpid condition; age had increased the sluggishness of his movements and his aversion to active measures; the caricaturists of Vienna represented the marshal in his nightcap, comfortably sleeping, while Frederick was engaged in fighting.

But in Silesia the Austrians under Laudon, together with their Russian allies, pursued a more vigorous policy, which might have resulted in Frederick's final

overthrow, if the generals of the two nations had been able to agree. Several times he was surrounded by armies twice as strong as his own; an able general in sole command could have annihilated the Prussian army; the career of Frederick would probably have terminated in an honorable death on the field of defeat. He was saved from such a fate by the dissensions of his enemies. The Russians declared that they would have to bear the brunt of a battle; they would be sent to storm the fortified heights, guarded by Frederick's well-directed artillery and well-trained troops, while, if their efforts were successful, the Austrian commander would claim all the glory of the day. Laudon in his turn lamented that the Russians would do nothing; that if he extracted from their leader a promise to join in an attack, before preparations could be made he changed his mind and would not move from his camp. Though no decisive battle was fought, the campaign did not end without Frederick suffering severe losses. In October, Laudon stormed the important fortress of Schweidnitz, which had been Frederick's base of supplies. Thirty-five hundred men were taken prisoners; three hundred cannon and enormous amounts of supplies and materials of war fell into the hands of the Austrians.

This great loss was followed by another disaster, and the Russians after a long siege captured Colberg. Not only were the Russians, when they had taken this place, masters of a large part of Pomerania, but their possession of the town threatened Frederick with a more serious danger than the loss of a province. At Colberg the Russians decided to make their winter quarters, instead of taking the long march to the Vistula, from which they could not return before

summer; their forces would thus be ready for operations in the early spring of 1762. Frederick had now to prepare, not for hostilities which would begin in June and end in October, but to oppose the superior armies of Russia and Austria during a campaign that might last most of the year; slow as were the operations of the allies, if they had for them nine months instead of four, it diminished the possibility of defending Prussia against superior forces.

Frederick's position had never seemed so desperate as in the winter of 1761–62. In the next campaign he could not hope to put over one hundred thousand men in the field, and they would be worth much less than one hundred thousand of such soldiers as he had commanded when the war began. His forces had been driven out of part of Saxony, and he could no longer compel that unhappy country to exhaust its resources in order to sustain a war waged against its own ruler.[1] Large parts of Pomerania and Silesia, the provinces by the Rhine, and all of the province of Prussia were in the hands of his enemies; from these portions of a kingdom, small at best, the king could obtain neither recruits nor money; from their headquarters at Colberg the Russians could move early in the spring, and soon make themselves masters of Berlin and all Brandenburg; what little territory would still be left him was so exhausted that he could with difficulty raise from it men or money, horses or provisions; the end seemed near, and Frederick indited during this winter an unusually large number of

[1] The contributions levied on Saxony increased from two million three hundred thousand reichsthalers in 1756 to almost seven million in 1758, and Frederick was still dissatisfied that more was not obtained. *Pol. Cor.*, xviii. 125.

odes in praise of suicide. "I think the king of Prussia is greatly embarrassed," wrote Voltaire, "but, like me, he keeps on writing bad verses;"[1] but then it was that fortune turned, and prosperity succeeded to a long season of adversity.

The health of the Czarina Elizabeth had been infirm for many years; even before the war broke out, politicians had speculated how long she had to live, and on the startling changes her death might at any time produce. The heir to the throne was the Grand Duke of Holstein, a grandson of Peter the Great and the nephew of the czarina. It was well known that he cherished for Frederick an extravagant admiration, and no one could foretell the course he would pursue when he was in power.

In the autumn of 1761, the czarina seemed better than usual, and in November the Austrian minister comforted his mistress with the assurance that her Russian ally might be expected to live for many years.[2] If his prophecy had proved true, it is hard to say what would have been the fate of Frederick II., but in December the czarina became seriously ill, and her condition was soon desperate; on January 5, 1762, she died, and the grand duke reigned in her place as Peter III. of Russia.

The new ruler was not far removed from insanity. His education had been neglected, and he had grown up surrounded by favorites and parasites of the worst order. His dress was as bizarre as his character; in his zeal to appear as a soldier, he always wore gaiters so tight that it was with difficulty he could

[1] Voltaire to Richelieu, January 27, 1761. He calls the king "Luc."

[2] Mercy, November 11.

bend his knees; his legs moved like a pair of stilts, while his face, which seemed that of a buffoon, was shaded by an enormous hat, that he imagined gave him the air of a field marshal. The part of government in which he took the most lively interest was the army; having had no opportunity to fight battles, he sought consolation in drilling his regiments, and at all hours his unhappy soldiers had to march and wheel and double-quick under the orders of their too zealous commander.

It was natural that a young man whose mind was weak, and whose tastes were martial, should regard almost with idolatry the greatest soldier in Europe. If Peter could not resemble Frederick in intellect, he could imitate him in his clothes; he arrayed himself in a Prussian uniform, he sought to copy the gestures and modes of speech of the great king; his troops were equipped and drilled on Prussian models; he drank to the health of the Prussian king, and, kneeling before his portrait, cried out, "My brother, we together could conquer the world."

Frederick had not to fear the hostility of so enthusiastic an admirer. Hardly was Peter seated on the throne when he sent off a letter assuring the Prussian king of his desire to be his friend. This overture was followed by more decisive measures. It was in vain that the allies of Russia sought to remind the new ruler of the treaties in force; the Austrian ambassador found the royal closet always closed to him; the young czar purposed to govern his empire according to his own notions, and paid no more attention to his allies than to his ministers. By a treaty made with Austria, Russia was to have the province of Prussia as a reward for her services; this province was far

removed from Frederick's other possessions, and the Russians had seized it early in the war; even if Frederick could have saved Silesia, it is difficult to see how he could have forced the Russians to abandon their prey.[1] But Peter did not belong to the monarchs who enlarge their dominions at the expense of their neighbors; in this respect he did not copy his model. By May, 1762, a treaty of peace had been signed between Russia and Prussia; Peter gave back all the possessions of Frederick of which the Russian armies were in occupation, and agreed that his troops should forthwith be withdrawn from them; all that he asked in return was a place in Frederick's heart and a commission in his army.

The Prussian king would have paid a larger price than this to recover a province. Peter received his commission as lieutenant-general in the Prussian army, and was now justly entitled to wear the Prussian uniform, which afforded him so great delight. The czar was not content to be at peace with the object of his adoration, — he wished to become his ally. Moreover, since he had been made a general in the Prussian service, he felt as much bound to place his troops under Frederick's orders as though he had been a Prussian subject instead of a Russian monarch.[2]

Orders were sent his forces, not only to leave their Austrian allies without delay, but to report themselves under Frederick's command. Rarely has so rapid and so complete a transformation scene been enacted

[1] Frederick writes Finckenstein in February to hasten the negotiations with Peter and accede to all his desires, "pour nous retirer du bord du precipice."

[2] Mercy to Maria Theresa, April 25, 1762.

during a great war. In January, 1762, the Russians were carrying on war with the Austrians, and in June they were carrying on war against them. This changed the whole situation of affairs; a few months before, Frederick had seemed hopelessly lost, and now, without a battle or even a skirmish, he had become master of the situation. Only with the aid of Russia, and by slowly wearing out his powers of endurance, had Maria Theresa hoped that she could at last get the better of her adversary; if in six years she had not been able to bring Frederick to terms when she had Russia as an ally, it was certain she could not do so when she had Russia for a foe.

Another member of the great alliance deserted the cause: Sweden followed Peter's example, and made peace with Prussia. Sweden had long ceased to be a power of any importance, and the subsidies paid by France for her aid against Frederick had been money wasted. The loss, therefore, was not important, but it showed that the cause of the coalition was regarded as desperate after Russia had deserted it. Already financial needs had compelled the Austrian government to reduce by twenty thousand men the soldiers put in the field, and when the support of Russia was lost, a less determined ruler than Maria Theresa would have abandoned all hope of humiliating her enemy. Even she was obliged to admit that her fond anticipation of reducing Prussia to a second-class power, of parceling out its possessions among Austria and her allies, must now be abandoned. But after six years of carnage, she could not yet bring herself to consent to a peace that would allow Frederick to escape unscathed. Large parts of Silesia were in the possession of the Austrians; even though she could not hold

the entire province, she hoped to retain some portion of it as the fruits of the long war. She found some comfort also in the changed position of England; Pitt had been dismissed, and Bute intimated his willingness to consent to a peace, by which Frederick should sacrifice something in return for the surrender of the possessions that were now in the hands of his enemies.

Accordingly, in the spring of 1762, the last campaign of the Seven Years' war began. The early operations were not important; Daun was unwilling to do anything but watch Frederick, and the king was not inclined to force a battle. But in June, twenty thousand Russians under Czernitscheff joined Frederick's army. In order to visit upon the enemy some of the evils from which Prussia had suffered, a body of Cossacks was sent to ravage Bohemia. Such a task the Cossacks always performed with thoroughness. "Their proceedings were cruel," says Frederick; "they sacked and pillaged and burned the places which they found on their way."[1] The Prussian army, strengthened by the Russian reinforcements, was now superior in numbers to the forces under Daun, and Frederick anticipated more important results than burning a few villages and torturing a few peasants. He hoped to recover both Glatz and Schweidnitz, and to drive the Austrians out of Silesia.

But the year was fertile in political surprises. On the 19th of July, the Russian general, with tears in his eyes, informed Frederick that Peter had been deposed from the throne, and that the ruler of all the Russias was now a woman and a foreigner. Peter

[1] *Mém. Hist.*, 1762; also reports to the Austrian government, describing the cruelties practiced by the Cossacks.

had married the Princess Catherine of Anhalt, the daughter of a petty German ruler. A variety of circumstances had led to an alliance which seemed far more illustrious than an unimportant princess could reasonably hope for, but the character of her husband was an offset to the elevation of his position. His vagaries became more pronounced after he had mounted the throne. Catherine had no influence with her husband, and she declared that even her life might be in danger in some of his insane freaks; he threatened her with death, and with confinement in a convent, which she feared still more. Not only did Peter neglect his wife, for which, considering her unconcealed gallantries, he might have some excuse, but he contrived in every way to alienate his subjects. He offended also the religious feeling which was strong in Russia; he sought to deprive the clergy of their land and of their beards, and they would surrender neither; and he neglected to receive the consecration at Moscow which long usage demanded. His devotion to the Prussian king was also bitterly denounced; he had, it was said, betrayed his country in his zeal for his idol; he had surrendered provinces of great value to please his Prussian friend, and now he was about to involve the nation in war in order to help him. Peter's soldiers were weary of incessant drilling, and complained that they were in danger of freezing in their northern climate, in the Prussian uniforms which the czar, in his extravagance, insisted on their wearing; the citizens of St. Petersburg declared that their life was like existence in a besieged city, on account of the incessant roar of artillery let off to satisfy the czar's military enthusiasm; priests and peasants, soldiers and citizens, politicians and patri-

ots, were alike weary of the freaks of a half insane ruler.[1]

It was not difficult to form a combination for the overthrow of such a monarch, and Catherine's cool judgment and keen intelligence fitted her for the task. She had only to show herself to the soldiers in order to receive their suffrage, while priests and people were equally eager in behalf of a princess who had shown special zeal in conforming to the usages of the Greek Church. In a few hours the revolution was accomplished, and Catherine was declared empress of all the Russias.[2] Peter was only a little distance away when he was suddenly informed of his overthrow; in despair at his friendless condition, he executed a paper consenting to his deposition, and declaring over his own signature that he was unfit to rule the empire. Even this did not save his life; a few days later the unfortunate sovereign was strangled by Count Orloff. Catherine probably had directed the act, and certainly she approved of it.

The news of this revolution was received with enthusiasm at Vienna, and with consternation at Berlin. It was in part the reaction against Peter's extraordinary devotion to Frederick that had enabled Catherine to mount the throne; it was natural to expect that she would return to the Austrian alliance which her insane husband had deserted. "This is one of the most fortunate events of the war," Kaunitz wrote to Maria Theresa, as he hastened to send her the news, "and I take the liberty of felicitating you upon it."[3] "In all my life," said Maria Theresa, "no-

[1] These grounds of complaint are given in Keith's correspondence. Raumer, *Beiträge*, ii.

[2] Keith to Grenville, July 12, 1762.

[3] Kaunitz to Maria Theresa, July 21, 1762.

thing has given me greater joy than the fortunate accession of the Russian empress." [1]

These ardent expressions were hardly justified by the outcome. Catherine was as able, as ambitious, and as calculating as Frederick himself; it is not likely that, if she had succeeded to Elizabeth, she would have surrendered all that Russia held of Prussian possessions, except on receiving substantial compensation; but since then the situation had changed, and the Russian troops now formed part of Frederick's army. If Catherine had no thought of involving Russia in war to help the Prussian king, neither did she see any good prospect of advantage in aiding Austria in an effort to crush him. The corps commanded by Czernitscheff was ordered forthwith to leave Frederick's army and retire into Poland, but Catherine declined to yield any further to the solicitations of the Austrian minister; she contented herself with remaining at peace with both sides, and leaving Austria and Prussia to settle their disputes between themselves.

The Russian general informed Frederick of the orders that he had received from his new sovereign, but he was persuaded to delay his departure for three days, and of those the Prussian king made good use. By a series of skillful manœuvres, and some sharp fighting, he succeeded in cutting off Daun from Schweidnitz. The marshal fell back into Bohemia, and the king, even without his Russian allies, could now undertake the siege of that important fortress. The Austrians were unable to relieve the place, and

[1] Maria Theresa to Mercy, July 29. It is fair to say that this expression of joy was before Maria Theresa had heard of Peter's murder.

on October 9, the fortress, the loss of which a year before had plunged Frederick in despair, again fell into his hands, together with nine thousand Austrian prisoners. The campaign in Silesia closed with the advantages on Frederick's side; what the Austrians had gained when they had Russia as an ally, they were now losing when they had to contend unassisted against Prussia.

The Prussian arms were equally successful elsewhere. Prince Henry, in 1762, carried on a prosperous campaign in Saxony, and towards the close of the year he defeated the German auxiliaries of Austria at Freiberg. The Prussians pushed on to Ratisbon, and the Electors of Bavaria and of Mainz, terrified at these reverses, made their peace with Frederick. On every side the members of the alliance, formed for Frederick's ruin, were abandoning the cause; the time had at last come when the lion-hearted queen who had formed it recognized that the task she had undertaken had now become impossible, and with a heavy heart she prepared for a peace that would leave Frederick the ruler of territories which had once been hers.

In the mean time, the other great combatants had withdrawn from the struggle. In the summer of 1761, negotiations for peace between France and England were seriously undertaken, but it proved impossible to agree upon terms. Pitt was at the head of the British government, and he was not inclined to abate one tittle from the uttermost demands. Now, he said, was the time so to break the power of France that she could never again be a serious rival to England upon the sea. "I will not rest," he cried, "till I have laid her on her back." The French were willing to yield

much, but Pitt demanded more: he insisted that Dunkirk should be dismantled, he desired to exclude the French from any share in the Newfoundland fisheries, he refused any compensation for the ships captured before the declaration of war, he would not abandon Frederick, even though the French withdrew from the combination against him; what perhaps most hindered the success of the negotiations was the haughty tone which he adopted in all his communications with the French court. Even his agent at Paris suggested that while it was necessary to treat the French with firmness and dignity, it might be expedient to soften his asperity.[1] The French envoy had no success in obtaining concessions from so imperious an opponent; when he saw the great commoner in his chamber, he was so appalled by his fulminations that he left, trembling with fear, and at once wrote for his passports to return to France.[2]

If Pitt would concede nothing, Choiseul had now obtained a new ally, and was less inclined to concede all that was demanded. At the beginning of the war, efforts had been made to enlist Spain in the cause of France, but they met with no success. Ferdinand VI., the son of Philip V., was then on the Spanish throne; he felt little sympathy for his French kinsmen, and was firmly resolved not to involve himself in their behalf. "If I cannot bring him to be as much an Englishman as I desire," wrote the English ambassador, "I will be more sanguine than I am apt to be that he will never be a Frenchman."[3] This prophecy was justified, and Ferdinand declined any intimate

[1] Stanley to Pitt, August 26, 1761.
[2] *Ib.*, June 28, 1761.
[3] Keene to Bedford, June 24, 1749.

alliance with the court of Versailles. In truth, it was a Portuguese princess, rather than a Bourbon prince, who was on the throne. Ferdinand in many respects resembled his father, and like him, he was always governed by his wife.

After the French had captured Minorca, they offered it to Spain if she would take part in the war against England. The offer was declined, and during Ferdinand's reign Spain maintained a strict neutrality, refusing to be driven from it either by the solicitations of the French, or by the high-handed proceedings sometimes adopted by the English in dealing with neutral as well as with hostile ships.

In 1758, the queen died. Ferdinand's mind had always been shadowed by the physical ailments and the mental gloom which he inherited; it was entirely shattered by the loss of the companion on whom he relied for counsel and direction. His mental disease developed in much the same manner as that of his father: the king shut himself up in seclusion; he refused to talk, and indulged in the curious idiosyncrasy of several of these Spanish Bourbons, — he persisted in wearing for an indefinite time a very dirty shirt.[1] Thus the monarch moped and pined, and in August, 1759, one year after his wife's death, he was gathered to his ancestors.

He was succeeded by the best ruler that the family of Spanish Bourbons produced. Charles III. was a younger son of Philip, and by the aid of France and his own energy, he obtained the crown of the Two Sicilies. He gained the affection of his Italian subjects by an administration more wise and beneficial

[1] Bristol to Pitt, November 13, 1758, *Cor. d'Espagne*, 1758–59.

than was often enjoyed by Naples or Sicily, and it was with their sincere regret that, upon Ferdinand's death without children, Charles, in 1759, left Naples to become the king of Spain.[1]

The new ruler of Spain had long borne a grudge against the English; when he was a young monarch and fresh in the enjoyment of power, the war of the Austrian Succession began, and Charles prepared to assist his brother in the conquest of Parma. Just then the English fleet appeared in the bay of Naples, and notified the young king that the guns of the fleet would open on his capital unless he stayed quietly at home. Certainly this was the wisest thing he could have done, but it was humiliating to have his foreign policy dictated at the cannon's mouth, and he bore no love for such imperious counselors. It was with anticipation, therefore, that the French looked forward to the occupancy of the Spanish throne by a prince who was intelligent, who was attached to his French relatives, and who did not have a Portuguese wife.

If they hoped that he would at once become an active ally, they were doomed to disappointment. Charles found that, even in time of peace, the expenses of his new kingdom exceeded its receipts by twelve million livres, that his ships were short of sailors, his armies were short of men, and that most of his advisers were short of brains. It is to his credit that in all these respects great progress was made during the twenty-nine years of his reign, and that if the Spain which he ruled was far removed from the

[1] He was succeeded at Naples by his third son, the oldest son being an imbecile, and the second becoming heir to the Spanish throne.

mighty empire which Charles V. had governed, it was far superior to the decrepit and paralytic state over which Philip V. had been king. But these improvements required long years for their accomplishment, and in her present condition, if Spain went to war, it was almost certain that she herself would be the party that would suffer most.

These views were inculcated by two persons who had great influence over the king, — his wife, who was a Saxon princess, and Wall, his chief minister, who was by birth an Irishman. The queen died, and the friendly sentiments of Charles for France then met with less opposition. Wall also, convinced that friendship for England might cause his own overthrow, changed his tone, and began to complain with acerbity of the high-handed conduct of the English, of vessels searched without right, of trade carried on with Spanish colonies contrary to treaty stipulations.[1]

During the progress of the negotiations with Pitt, Choiseul became convinced that the Spanish king was ready for an intimate treaty of alliance, such as the French had unsuccessfully sought to obtain.[2] It was manifest, indeed, that peace with England would be more beneficial than any alliance with Spain. In the summer of 1761, the English captured Belle Isle, just off the French coast. Almost at the same time came the news of the surrender of Pondicherri and the final and complete overthrow of the French cause in India, and such misfortunes showed what France had to

[1] Wall, writes the French ambassador in April, says that it is impossible "que les Anglais reforment leur conduite arrogante et intolerable." Ossun to Choiseul, April 3, 1761.

[2] The negotiations for the third "pacte de famille" began in the spring of 1761. *Cor. d'Espagne*, 531.

expect from a continuation of the struggle against the overwhelming power of England upon the sea. Choiseul would probably have accepted the terms offered him, but the willingness which Charles expressed to join his fortunes with those of France encouraged the minister in refusing to make all the sacrifices that Pitt inflexibly demanded, and the negotiations for peace were broken off.

In the mean time, the overtures made to Spain had been favorably received, and on the 15th of August, 1761, the famous family compact was signed. It has been lauded as the great achievement of Choiseul's ministry, but it is hard to see how an alliance that proved disastrous to both parties can be regarded as a diplomatic triumph. Neither was a so-called family alliance between France and Spain any novelty. The treaty of 1733 was also a family compact, and was declared to be so in the words of the instrument. By it France had involved herself in an effort to obtain Italian possessions in Italy for the children of Elizabeth Farnese, and so grievous did the burden prove that Fleury at last wisely insisted that it was impossible of fulfillment, and gained something for his own country by refusing to let Spanish princes reap the whole benefit of a successful war. The unwise and unfortunate treaty of Fontainebleau, signed by Louis XV. in 1743, had in like manner been a family compact; as a result of its provisions, France gained nothing by the victories of Fontenoy and Roucoux, and it has always been bitterly condemned, even by those who have found the compact of 1761 a triumph of statesmanship. It must be said that the treaty prepared by Choiseul was fairer in its terms, and the advantages stipulated in it were not for Spain alone.

By this treaty, the two Bourbon sovereigns again agreed to form a perpetual alliance; each guaranteed to the other his possessions; each was to come to the aid of the other when required; Spain was to furnish twelve thousand men and France twenty-four thousand whenever demanded, and each promised to send twelve ships of the line and six frigates to the other's assistance; the two nations were to act together in all negotiations for peace, and were to consider the interests of each in apportioning gains and losses; and the citizens of the one country trading in the European possessions of the other were to be treated on terms of equality; that is, a Frenchman residing in Spain should be subjected to no heavier imposts than if he were a Spanish citizen. As was the case with most treaties, the gist of the matter was found in a secret article by which it was provided that if England had not made peace with France by May 1, 1762, Spain would declare war upon her.[1]

The disadvantages of the family compact, alike to France and Spain, were soon proved by the logic of events, and the last year of the war proved disastrous to both branches of the Bourbon family. For the campaign in Germany in 1762, the command of the French army was given to Soubise, with whom Marshal Estrées was associated as an adviser. There had been little doubt as to the result of the quarrel between the French commanders at Villinghausen. Soubise was discreet, and firmly intrenched in the good will of the favorite and of the king; Broglie, confident in his military capacity and his long services, trusted to them for his justification. He trusted in vain. In February, 1762, he was relieved from his

[1] The treaty is found in *Cor. d'Espagne*, t. 533, *Aff. Etr.*

command, removed from his government, and exiled to his estates.

Under Louis XIV., he who incurred the monarch's displeasure could not look for popular sympathy; one under the ban of the king was regarded by the public much as a man under the ban of the church was regarded by the faithful in the days of Innocent III. As the reign of Louis XV. drew to its close, a punishment inflicted by the court often went far towards making its victim the hero of the populace. Public feeling was greatly roused when it became known that Broglie had been sacrificed and Soubise retained. Two days later, as "Tancred" was acted at the Français, and as the charming Mlle. Clairon turned to the audience and repeated, with great spirit, the words "Tancred is unhappy, he is exiled, he is wronged; it is the lot of heroes to be persecuted," the audience greeted the allusion with thunders of applause, and it was a quarter of an hour before quiet was restored.[1] Such demonstrations were unheeded, the representation of "Tancred" was forbidden, and Soubise retained his command.

In 1762, nearly one hundred thousand French soldiers were in the field. They were divided into two armies, of which the larger was commanded by Soubise, and the smaller by the Prince of Condé, who surpassed Soubise in rank and equaled him in inefficiency. The detail of the campaign is unimportant; the French could accomplish nothing under such leadership, and Prince Ferdinand, with smaller numbers, baffled his enemies at every point. In June, there was a sharp engagement at Wilhelmsthal; one

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, i. 43; *Journal de Barbier*, February, 1762.

wing of the army sustained an attack with courage, and the French might have gained a victory. But when battalions were manœuvring and cannon roaring, Soubise always lost his head; he now ordered a retreat, and the victory remained with Prince Ferdinand.

In October, the prince laid siege to Cassel. This important post was well fortified and strongly garrisoned; the allies had only sixty thousand men for their undertaking, and Soubise was near by with ninety thousand, and still the town was forced to surrender. The marshal found it impossible either to attack Ferdinand or to raise the siege; his men marched to and fro in vain, and on November 1, Cassel, with fifteen thousand men, surrendered, while an army for its relief, far stronger than the army of besiegers, had for weeks been within a few miles of the place. This ignominious result, said Napoleon, proved the truth of the saying that an army of deer led by a lion would accomplish more than an army of lions led by a deer.[1]

If the loss of Cassel was one of the most disgraceful disasters which France suffered in the Seven Years' war, it was the last; on November 1, the town surrendered; on November 3, the preliminary articles of peace between France and England were signed. The campaign of 1762 was the last in which French soldiers appeared on the battlefields of Europe under the old régime. France was to take a generous part in securing the liberty of the New World, but when her armies were again seen on Continental battlefields, they marched under the tricolor and not under the white flag of the Bourbons. In war as in poli-

[1] *Précis de Napoleon* for 1762.

tics, the old régime was nearing the end, and that end was marked by inefficiency, defeat, and disgrace. The superiority of her administration, the courage of her nobility as well as of her common soldiers, long rendered France the first military power of Europe; the Seven Years' war showed that renovation was needed in her military as well as in her political system, if the country was to hold the position which it had formerly occupied, and it was under republican institutions that French armies next appeared on fields of victory.

It was with even poorer fortune that the Bourbon allies contended on the seas; the impotence of Spain involved her in worse disaster than France had suffered from the inefficiency of Soubise. It was the fatal defect of the new alliance, as with the similar ones that had been formed since Louis XIV. placed his grandson on the Spanish throne, that the decay of that kingdom rendered her support of little benefit. This weakness had been displayed in every war in which Spain had been engaged for a century, and yet so deep rooted was the impression produced by the power and glory of the kingdom of Charles V. and Philip II., that two hundred years later Europe felt of it a certain lingering dread. The real condition of Spain and of Portugal, the two nations that had been great maritime powers when England had no possessions more distant than Calais, was stated by an intelligent English observer, at this time. "Ten thousand well-disciplined troops upon the frontier," he said, "might take their choice whether they would march to Lisbon or to Madrid."[1]

As soon as Pitt heard of the compact signed be-

[1] Tyrawly to Pitt, April 15, 1762, *Chatham Cor.*

tween France and Spain, he insisted that war should be declared upon the latter country. His judgment was surely right; in a war against Spain, England had nothing to lose and much to gain. "Mr. Pitt," said an acute though unfriendly observer, "measures his animosity by the number of vessels which he can descry on the seas, and just now he can see more Spanish than French."[1] His advice was rejected, and he resigned his office amid the just applause of a nation for which he had done so great things. The ministers who had voted against war with Spain in October were forced to declare war in January. The Bourbon allies demanded of Portugal to join them, and upon her refusal the Spanish invaded that country. It is probable that Portugal alone would have proved a match for Spain; with the assistance of the English she could regard Spanish hostility with indifference. The invasion was repelled, and the Spanish forces retreated within their own boundaries.

While Portugal was repelling her invaders, the English were profiting by the folly which led Spain to expose herself to their attack, and so great was the superiority of the English navy, that they proceeded tranquilly from victory to victory.

The French navy had been reduced to a very low ebb by the disasters of the war, but Choiseul now assumed in person the department of the marine. His vigor and the hopes excited by the Spanish alliance aroused new enthusiasm, and efforts were made in every quarter to strengthen the navy. The states of Languedoc and Burgundy, the six orders of merchants, officers of the king, bankers of the court, employees of the post, city governments, and chambers

[1] Abbé Galiani to Fanucci, June 1, 1761.

of commerce vied with one another in raising funds for the equipment of men-of-war; ships were building in yards that had long been deserted; money flowed in with a freedom which showed the nation was able to make further sacrifices when it was animated by the hope that they might be of some avail.[1]

These efforts came too late; ships could not be built and equipped on short notice; the English captured Martinique and most of the Lesser Antilles from the French, while the defenseless colonial possessions of Spain offered still richer prizes. The Spanish marine was in the condition of everything that was Spanish; nominally, the country had a navy of fifty vessels, but it is not probable that one half of them were fit to go to sea; on paper there were fifty thousand sailors; when the invalids, the aged, and the children were struck from the lists, hardly twenty-five thousand remained. At Cadiz was a squadron of twelve good ships, but there were sailors for only half of them; to meet this condition of affairs, six ships were sent out for a cruise, and when they returned to port the same crews were put on the other six.[2] It is doubtful if the rest of the Spanish navy was even as well equipped and managed as the Cadiz squadron.

At all events, the Spanish had no fleets with which to protect their colonies against a nation that had one hundred and twenty ships of the line, and the English proceeded to wrest from a helpless adversary her widely scattered possessions in the eastern and the western continents. An expedition sailed to Cuba, and after a vigorous siege, Havana was forced to sur-

[1] *Mercure Historique* and *Journal de Barbier*, 1761, 1762.

[2] *Cor. d'Espagne*, 1760; Bristol to Egremont, December, 1761.

render; fourteen ships of the line and property valued at three million pounds were among the spoils. This great victory was followed by one of equal importance in the East. Manila and the whole group of Philippine Islands fell into the hands of the English, and their ransom yielded two millions more; the Acapulco galleon, with a cargo valued at three million dollars, and the treasure-ship from Lima, with four millions in silver, were captured by cruisers. So great was the superiority of the English at sea, both in the number and in the quality of their vessels, that they could capture very nearly anything they desired; if the war had continued, they might have made themselves masters of all the foreign possessions that had once belonged to Ferdinand and Isabella, to Charles and Philip; Mexico and Peru might have been added to Canada and India.

The fleets of France and Spain made no conquests to offset these great losses; with the exception of some captures of merchantmen, the new allies hardly attempted anything. Nine months had not passed when it was shown that Spain as an ally, instead of aiding France, was involving herself in ruin; a helpless ally had been induced to join a cause where she could be of no service, and where she exposed herself to the loss of undefended possessions scattered over the world. The brief and inglorious war exhibited the condition to which the Spanish marine had sunk; neither Charles nor Choiseul could indulge in further illusions as to the advantages that might be won by the family compact; their only endeavor was to obtain peace and save Spain from further loss on account of her rash act.

It was easier for the defeated powers to obtain tol-

erable terms of peace, because the great war minister was no longer in the councils of their enemy. Bute was now the prime minister of George III.; he had already stopped the payment of the subsidy which England furnished Prussia, and had angered Frederick by intimations that he must sacrifice some territory for the sake of peace. When it was suggested to Choiseul that the English minister was willing to consider terms, the overtures received a prompt response. In the alliance with Spain, Choiseul had played his last card, and a few months had shown its value. England was in as complete control on the seas as Napoleon was on the Continent after the battle of Jena. If she had cared to continue a war of conquest, she could have seized any of the colonial possessions of Spain or France with which to increase her foreign empire. From France, indeed, she had already taken nearly all there was to take, but if different men had controlled the English government, there was apparently no reason why that country should not have acquired from Spain her great and rich possessions in the West, why the development of South as well as North America should not have been carried on under English laws and civilization. And certainly had that been the result, there would have been an infinite gain, not only for England herself, but for the new countries, whose lot would have been shaped under the influence of England instead of Spain. But Lord Bute was not a Pitt, much less had he the restless ambition of Napoleon; he wished to make peace promptly, and to let off his adversaries as easily as was possible without too much exciting English feeling.

In September, 1762, Nivernais went to London to

obtain for France the best terms possible. The demands made by Pitt a year before, to which Choiseul had then refused to accede, seemed moderate in view of the additional disasters the French had sustained. But the English king took no pains to conceal his desire for a speedy peace, and he advised the French ambassador to conclude the matter before Parliament could again assemble and raise new difficulties.[1] Notwithstanding this benevolent suggestion, the negotiations proceeded slowly. While the king and his advisers wished peace, they greatly feared the expression of public sentiment which they must soon encounter. "The reason for the embarrassed and embarrassing conduct of the English ministers at this crisis," wrote Nivernais, who knew their desires and their perplexities, "is that they are dying of fear, and every one trembles when he has anything to do with making peace."

When the prime minister was eager to agree on terms, and the war party was clamoring for further conquests, it is doubtful if he received with any great degree of pleasure the intelligence of the capture of Havana, which reached London while the negotiations were in progress. The ministers dared not restore Havana without compensation, but they made their demands as moderate as was prudent in view of public feeling. This disaster, though it had befallen Spain, really affected only France. Louis XV. treated the Spanish king as a favored son whose losses the fond parent bears, and he at once wrote his kinsman, "I wish sincerely that Spain should not suffer from a war which the personal tenderness of your majesty for me has led her to undertake. If New Orleans or

[1] Nivernais to Choiseul, September 28, 1762.

Louisiana can be of use in obtaining the restoration of Havana, or as compensation for what must be given the English for it, I offer them to you, and I should regard it as a happy event if cessions on my part could prove to your majesty my gratitude."[1] Doubtless it was the theory of the government that France and her possessions were the property of the king, but the liberality with which Louis treated his kinsmen, not only at this time, but in the treaties of Fontainebleau and Aix-la-Chapelle, was always at the expense of the country he ruled.

The offer to bear the results of Havana's capture made it easy to conclude peace, and in November, 1762, the preliminaries between England, France, and Spain were signed. The French conceded most of the points which had caused the rupture of the negotiations carried on with Pitt; Bute and his associates consented to accept Florida in exchange for Havana; and Spain ceded to England all her possessions in North America east of the Mississippi. This loss was more than made up to her: by a separate treaty France granted to Spain the province known as Louisiana, with its vague claims over North America west of the Mississippi; the great territory which had furnished the basis for Law's speculations, and which now forms a large part of the United States, thus became Spanish property. To England, France ceded Canada and her other possessions in North America, Senegal, and various islands in the West Indies; she abandoned everything in India except a few unimportant trading-stations, and Minorca was restored. Between the cessions to England and Spain, France lost almost her entire foreign empire; there

[1] Louis XV. to Charles III., October 16, 1762.

remained only a few islands in the West Indies, and some not very important possessions in the East. Dunkirk was again dismantled, and on these terms in February, 1763, the treaty of Paris was signed. In all the history of England there is no treaty more glorious: it made her the chief colonial power of the world; it rendered it impossible for France to become her rival in the development of new lands or in the extension of foreign commerce. Doubtless the overthrow of French power in America prepared the way for the revolt of the English colonies, and in this probability the French found some consolation for their disappointments,[1] but none the less the treaty of Paris secured to English-speaking people the chief place in the future colonial and commercial development of the world, supremacy in North America and India, and the empire of the seas.

The great war was nearly ended; only a little time before, nearly every state in Europe, from the Atlantic to the Baltic, had been in arms; the contest had raged in America and Asia, in the Gulf of Mexico and the Indian Ocean; now all had agreed on terms except Austria and Prussia. The results of the campaign of 1762 convinced Maria Theresa that it was useless for her to continue the struggle in the hope of bringing Frederick to submission; the man who, with little aid, had resisted more than half of Europe, and who in the darkest days had preferred to expose his own life and his country's existence rather than seek peace at the price of dishonor, would surely yield nothing when he had only Austria to contend with, and his armies were everywhere successful. The queen was weary of the bloodshed and the disappointments of the long

[1] Choiseul refers to this in some of his letters.

war, she was growing old, and she sighed for peace. Late in November, a Saxon envoy visited Frederick's camp, and intimated that the Austrian court was ready to agree on terms. But Frederick's heart was ulcerated by the trials and the misery of the years through which he had passed, and he now hated Austria more bitterly than Maria Theresa had ever hated him. He received these overtures with expressions of distrust as to their sincerity, and in his reply accused his adversaries of bad faith and of many sins. Even the language adopted was not to his taste, for the documents were in German. The envoy read them slowly and with distinctness, so the king might be able to follow him, but Frederick said he could understand them better if they were in French. "I don't like those scrawly scratches," he said, as he looked at the papers written in German characters. Kaunitz was not discouraged by these exhibitions of temper; the propositions were put in more formal shape, and they were written in French to suit the convenience of the Prussian king.[1]

Frederick had no desire to throw away the chance of a peace which he sincerely desired by indulging in ill humor, and when he was convinced that the Austrian overtures were serious, he met them in a more accommodating spirit. He was, however, inflexible as to the terms; he knew that Maria Theresa would have made no advances unless she realized that her former hopes must be abandoned, and he was certain that his enemies must now accept conditions satisfactory to him. Glatz was still in the possession of the Austrians, and the queen was anxious to keep at least

[1] All the documents and the interviews in reference to these negotiations are found in Beaulieu's *Der Hubertusburger Friede.*

this portion of her former domains, but Frederick could not be moved, he would not yield a foot of land, and at last the demand was abandoned. A great effort was made to obtain for Saxony some compensation for all the long war had cost that ill-fated country. Of the amount of the losses there could be no question; apart from the ruin wrought by the presence of hostile armies, for seven years its ruler had not been able to collect a penny from his subjects, and Frederick during that period had compelled the electorate to contribute to his support nearly double the entire revenue he received from his own kingdom. As the struggle had been to preserve Prussia and not Saxony, and as Saxony had joined no compact against Frederick, the unfortunate electorate paid dearly for having a ruler who hated the Prussian king, but was not powerful enough to make his hostility dangerous. Frederick was little disturbed by such considerations; he had seized Saxony because it was rich and defenseless, and because without the money he extracted from that country, it would probably have been impossible for him to defend his own. His necessity had known no law, and he was resolved that he would give no compensation to a ruler who hated him and whom he despised. "He shall not have from me one single village or a single groschen," said Frederick.[1] Augustus was eager to return to his country on any terms, and the Austrians, after vain efforts to obtain something by negotiation, notified him that they were in no position to obtain anything by force. All that Frederick conceded was the promise of his vote for Joseph, as the future emperor; if Austria got nothing of substantial value, he was willing to concede to her an empty honor.

[1] *Der Hubertusburger Friede*, 32.

On February 15, 1763, the articles were signed which are known as the treaty of Hubertusburg. After seven years of war, in which it was estimated that a million men had perished, peace was made and not a hamlet in Europe changed its ruler. It is not often that so great a contest has left the combatants exactly where it found them. The one man who gained by the Seven Years' war was Frederick, and all that he gained was fame. His seizure of Silesia had begun the war of the Austrian Succession; his possession of Silesia was the cause of the Seven Years' war; Frederick conquered the province in a month, and he fought eleven years to hold it. He held it against a combination such as Europe has rarely seen; his title was not further to be questioned, and Austria never again sought to win back what she had lost.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE ADMINISTRATION OF CHOISEUL.

At the close of the Seven Years' war, the political influence of France in Europe was less than it had been since the wars of religion; she had made her utmost efforts by land and sea, with equal lack of success, and at the end she had been forced to accept the terms dictated by her enemies. Such a result was bitter to a people accustomed to victory and sensitive to any loss of national prestige; they were ill humored and discontented.

The statesman whose lot it is to make a humiliating peace often finds his political ruin, but Choiseul escaped this fate; he continued to enjoy the favor of the king and the confidence of the public to a larger extent than any minister since Fleury. He had not been in power when the alliance with Austria was made, and he was not held responsible for the disasters of the war that followed it; if he had been unable to secure victory, he had displayed in the increase of the navy and the reorganization of the army an amount of vigor which contrasted with the imbecile listlessness of many of his predecessors; under his charge new ships had been built, new treaties negotiated, and new life imparted to the administration. He had also many qualities which excite admiration: he was witty, he was fond of literature, he extended a magnificent hospitality which made him popular even among those who were not admitted to share it.

In love of splendor, in taste for literature, in a faculty for indefinite expenditure, Choiseul was the perfect type of the great seigneur of the period. His wife had a fortune yielding an income of three hundred thousand livres; he held two secretaryships; he was colonel of the Swiss guards, governor of Touraine, *grand bailli* of Haguenau, and with all his offices and emoluments he received each year from the government seven hundred thousand livres. Yet the minister succeeded in spending an income of a million, besides dissipating the most of his wife's fortune, and this result he accomplished without losing money at cards or placing it in unsafe investments. When he was removed from office he owed three millions. At his death he left no property and a vast indebtedness; his wife, with a devotion to his memory which was not deserved by any fidelity he had shown her in life, employed what remained of her fortune in paying her husband's debts.

Not only was Choiseul the most popular minister since Fleury, he was also the most powerful. Though Mme. de Pompadour retained Louis's favor until her death, her political influence waned as Choiseul's waxed. The minister remained the friend of the woman to whose good will he owed his promotion, but he had an imperious disposition and loved to rule, while his patroness was failing in health and weary of the political career which had brought her neither glory nor satisfaction. For many years Mme. de Pompadour played the part of a French premier, but she abandoned the rôle before the treaty of Paris; Choiseul was prime minister in everything but name, and so he continued until, in 1770, his political career came to an end.

His qualities were showy rather than solid; he was neither a great statesman like Richelieu, nor a sagacious reformer like Turgot; his mind worked quickly, and he pursued his plans with enthusiasm, though not always with tenacity, and he was more anxious to seem to succeed than actually to carry out the designs he had formed. The brilliant patron of literature was not so profound a politician as he believed himself to be, or as he was believed to be by others; men who were really masters of the art like Frederick and Kaunitz judged him less favorably and perhaps more justly. "Alberoni and Choiseul," said Frederick, "were minds of the same order, unquiet, aspiring, and superficial."[1] Yet he was a man of energy, fairly sagacious in gauging the changes in public opinion, and he did much to regain for France the prestige which a disastrous war had dissipated.

The misfortunes of the war had shown the evils from which the country suffered. Compared with her neighbors, France was powerful and she was rich, but every branch of the administration was corrupt and inefficient. The navy had been allowed to decay, the army had been unable to contend with the forces of a state like Prussia. Choiseul attempted to bring order out of anarchy, to see that the results accomplished bore some relation to the amount expended, and in these efforts he was not wholly unsuccessful.

The losses which the country had sustained from the neglect of her marine were apparent; this had cost her most of her colonial empire, and left her in a position of confessed inferiority when compared with England. With an energy which would have been more productive twenty-five years earlier, but was not

[1] Frederick to Prince Henry.

without fruit even later, Choiseul devoted himself to forming a navy that should be respectable in strength, and in developing the resources of the colonies that France still held.

At the close of the war, the marine consisted of about fifty ships, all told, of which many were in poor condition; by 1771, this weakened and dilapidated navy had been so increased that it consisted of seventy-two men-of-war and thirty-seven frigates, besides smaller ships; its strength had been doubled in less than ten years.[1] At the beginning of the Seven Years' war, the superiority of the English navy had been great; it was far less marked at the commencement of the American Revolution.

The French army had not been neglected; on the contrary, prodigious sums had been expended upon it, yet the defects in its organization had much to do with the disasters of the Seven Years' war. The superiority of the Prussian system was manifest, and, in 1762, Choiseul attempted changes by which the actual efficiency of the French army might correspond more nearly to its nominal strength. The vicious practice by which soldiers were enlisted by their captains as a sort of private enterprise, instead of by the government, was now checked; the standing army was fixed at about one hundred and fifty thousand men, and a stricter discipline was demanded of officers as well as of privates. In some respects, the condition of the army was still very primitive; the number of men in regiments varied largely, uniforms were far from being universal, and only very recently had the government furnished physicians and surgeons in the hospitals; those who saw fit to act as doctors in the hos-

[1] *Mém. de M. de Choiseul*, 1765; *Arch. de la Marine*, 1771.

pitals did it without pay, and the contractors to whom their charge was left were supposed to furnish at their own expense what surgeons might be needed. A soldier who had been ill fed and ill clothed, if he was so unlucky as to be smitten with fever or struck with a bullet, was sent to a hospital where he might receive poor nursing and medical aid, and where, very possibly, he would receive none at all. In remedying these evils, Choiseul did valuable work. The army even under his administration was far from being the perfect machine which it has since become, but its efficiency was increased. Under Louvois the quality of the French army was undoubtedly superior to that of any other nation, with the possible exception of the English; its discipline was more thorough, its officers were better trained, the material needs of the men were more carefully attended to. In the Seven Years' war the French army was probably equal to that of Austria or Russia, but in discipline and military qualities alike, men and officers were far inferior to those who served under Frederick. There was no opportunity to test, in a great European war, the value of Choiseul's reforms, but there can be no question of their importance.

The rapid increase of national debt and the growing deficits were the most alarming symptoms in the condition of the state, and in this field for reform Choiseul accomplished little. The embarrassments which resulted from the war became no less under his administration; a man who squandered his own estate with prodigality was not likely to balance the budget by rigid economy. "The name Choiseul," said Louis XVI., "means spendthrift." But these financial evils could not have been remedied except by reforms that

Louis XV. would not have sanctioned, and for which his minister had no aptitude. Only by an entire revision of the system of taxation, by stopping the profits of the farmers of taxes, by enforcing order and economy in expenditure, and by checking fraud and corruption among officials, could the finances have been placed on a solid basis. Such reforms were no more likely to be made in France under Louis XV. than under the Khedive of Egypt before the English occupation.

Still, Choiseul got more for the money expended than many of his predecessors. While he was secretary for foreign affairs the subsidies paid foreign powers were reduced to one quarter of their former amount; when he became secretary of war he spent on the army one hundred and twenty million livres, while Belle Isle, his predecessor in office, had spent one hundred and eighty millions. These reductions in expenditure were not accompanied by any loss in efficiency, for if France gained no more victories at the close of the Seven Years' war than at its beginning, at least she sustained no more defeats.

The minister accomplished what was of greater importance than cutting off a few pensions or stopping an occasional fraud, — he fostered and assisted the increase of national wealth. Already a curious phenomenon had appeared in France; the nation was growing richer and the condition of large classes improving, while the government became more hopelessly bankrupt. This continued under Choiseul's administration and down to the time of the Revolution. While the financial straits of the government helped to bring on the final catastrophe, yet for fifty years the population of France had been increasing

and her wealth growing with a rapidity of which there was no example in the past. If distress and stagnant trade drove a nation to revolt, a revolution towards the close of Louis XIV.'s reign would have been more probable than in 1789; it was rather new enterprises and new aspirations that overthrew the existing government, the new wine that could no longer be contained in the old bottles.

The colonies which France had retained by the peace of Paris were insignificant compared with those she lost, but their importance was greatly increased by a new spirit of commercial legislation. France had not been far behind Spain in the rigor with which she sought to keep for the home country all that could be gained from trade with colonists, and in trying to get all the profits she kept them from becoming large. Choiseul, though not a disciple of the physiocrats, was by no means a blind worshiper of the commercial principles of the last century. At St. Lucia, at St. Domingo, and elsewhere, free ports were now established; merchandise could be brought into them, not only from France, but from the country where the colonist found he could purchase to the best advantage.[1] In France itself, the number of ports with which the colonists could deal had been restricted, in the endeavor to obtain some advantages for favored towns. New ports were now thrown open, the monopolies of the East India Company were extinguished, and trade with India was opened to all; commercial privileges and restrictions fell on every hand. Even Protestants and Jews were allowed to practice their faith in the colonies, and were received as immigrants.

[1] Ordinance, July 12, 1763.

An increase of trade is sure to follow in the wake of such measures. Alike, the wealth and population of the colonies and their trade with the mother country grew rapidly. In 1763, St. Lucia was hardly inhabited: ten years later, it had twenty thousand people; the population of Guadeloupe gained seventy-five thousand in thirteen years; the commerce between France and the Antilles increased three hundred per cent. in twenty years. In 1765, a line of packet-boats began to ply regularly between Rochefort and the Antilles, and a boat left every month; in 1775, six hundred vessels were engaged in trading with the West India islands, carrying one hundred and sixty millions of merchandise.[1] Ten years later, this trade had again more than doubled, and represented almost four hundred million livres a year.

While the foreign commerce of France in the East as well as in the West was increasing with a rapidity worthy of the nineteenth century, important changes were attempted in the internal economy of the kingdom. It was now some time since the physiocrats had begun preaching their doctrines of enlarged freedom for the husbandman, the mechanic, and the merchant. Fifty years earlier, the books of Quesnay and Mirabeau and Gournay would not have secured the change of one of the innumerable regulations which owed their origin to mediæval trade unions, or to Colbert and his disciples. French conservatism in trade and husbandry, and a strong and steadfast belief in the principles of paternal government, would have been impervious to arguments which sought to show that it would be better for all if the government did not prescribe with what a man should plant his field, where he

[1] *Choiseul et la France d'outre mer*, 251.

should sell his grain, or how he should weave his stuffs. Within a few years the French mind, long averse to any novelty, suddenly became eager for every novelty; the writings of the physiocrats were popular, their books lay open on the tables of gentlemen engaged in having their heads powdered and of ladies employed in painting their cheeks; they were discussed at the suppers of Mme. de Pompadour as well as at those of Quesnay. In the years following the peace of Paris, everybody began to talk and write on subjects which in the past had attracted the attention of few. The press teemed with treatises containing plans for improving the system of taxation, for increasing the production of grain and the amount of trade, with theories of change in every branch of legislation and administration. Quesnay dwelt on the importance of the agricultural interests, Gournay demanded the abolition of restrictions on the sale of grain, and a corps of able writers published the "Ephémérides," a journal devoted solely to reforms in the regulation of agriculture and commerce. Such works multiplied because the public were interested in the subjects they discussed. Galiani, one of the wittiest of abbés, wrote his famous letters on the commerce in grain; fifty years before, such a man would no more have thought of writing about corn laws than about the differential calculus. At that period Vauban had suggested projects of financial reform, and his books had been received with ill will by the court and with indifference by the public. "Now," said Voltaire, "the rage for projects concerning finance has seized the nation."

The doctrines of the physiocrats were the first to pass from the realm of abstract economy to that of practical politics. In 1754, an edict declared that

grain might be freely sent from one part of the kingdom to another. Similar edicts had been issued before, but they were rescinded when a failure of the crops excited alarm in any district. It was now declared that in the future grain should move freely in the interior of the kingdom without need of the permissions or passports that had long been required; that a man wishing to send a load of wheat from Normandy to Brittany, or from Berri to Burgundy, could do so without hindrance, and that superintendents would no longer endeavor to replace the laws of trade by the operations of their own wisdom. In 1764, a greater step was taken, for the free exportation of grain outside of France was allowed, so long as the price remained below a fixed maximum.

These reforms had already been put in partial execution. The southern provinces of Languedoc, Provence, and Dauphiné had long enjoyed a certain degree of freedom in the purchase and sale of grain, and profited by a more liberal commercial policy than prevailed in the rest of the kingdom. The superior condition of these favored districts, even in times of bad crops and when famine prevailed in many parts of France, had attracted the attention of observers, but had not induced the government to grant equal freedom to other provinces.[1]

As is often the case with the wisest changes, the freedom now allowed in the purchase and sale of grain did not work as well as had been hoped. The object of the government was to prevent violent fluctuations in wheat, and especially to keep the price from going too high. So far as modern legislation interferes

[1] Argenson speaks of the superior condition of the southern provinces during the famine of 1740. *Journal*, iii. 221.

with the exchange of agricultural products, it is usually in the interest of the home producer and to keep the price from going too low. But in the last century the peasants had no organization, no votes, and no influence, and the government did not endeavor by artificial means to raise the price of anything they had to sell. Moreover, they rarely profited, even if there was a special demand in some part of the world remote from their own province. Means of communication were poor; Paris, to the peasant of Brittany or Auvergne, seemed too distant for any direct dealings; he sold his grain to a local or itinerant speculator, and as it was never certain whether the export of grain from any province would be allowed, purchasers could not buy in safety unless they bought cheap. That the system in force had not worked well could hardly be denied; the price of grain fluctuated with a violence now unknown, and famines were common in a country where now they are no more apprehended than the black death. These evils, the economists had argued, would be done away with when natural laws were left to operate and the fear of interference was removed. But an ignorant peasantry was slow to change its practices or to hazard an increased cultivation because a demand might exist in other lands. The peasant still argued that when the crops had been large, his grain had been left to rot in the barn, and even when they had been poor, he had usually been obliged to sell at a low figure. As for the consumers, the most of them regarded the new experiment as hazardous, and the moment prices began to rise, they were ready to protest against measures which they said allowed wheat to be sent out of the country to feed Spaniards and Dutchmen, and left the French themselves to go hungry.

In 1768 and the ensuing years the crops were poor, and the people with one accord cried out against the new edicts as the cause of their ruin. There were riots in many places, and the usual scenes when bread was dear; warehouses were broken open and pillaged, and a few of the rioters were sent to the galleys as a punishment for such offenses.[1] In truth, the exports had been small; not over five per cent. of the total crop had been sent out of France in the plentiful years of 1765 and 1766, and the exports ceased as the home price became higher; but the information of the public on questions of political economy was slight, and arrays of figures rarely affect a popular outcry.[2] If bread was dear, it was declared that this was the fault of the new edicts, and that the evil was aggravated by the wicked devices of speculators, who found countenance at Versailles itself. The government always gave special heed to furnishing a sufficient supply of bread for the capital, and grain was often purchased for that city and sold at a loss in order to avoid the danger of disturbance at the capital; the population of Paris, like that of Rome, and for much the same reasons, received an amount of attention which was not extended to the provinces.

Wheat, therefore, was bought by the government and its representatives, and such operations easily became objects of suspicion to the public. Doubtless the farmers-general and the protégés of the court had opportunities for gain by which they sometimes profited, and the king, it was said, placed some of his private funds in the hands of these dealers as a good investment. Such speculations have small effect on

[1] *Reg. du parlement*, Normandy, 1768; Floquet, t. vi.

[2] *Mém. de Choiseul*, 73.

prices, but the vague rumor of them was magnified in importance amid a people poor, ignorant, and hungry.[1] Twenty years later, the *pacte de famine*, through which Louis XV. was supposed to have profited by the misery of his subjects, was a favorite theme for demagogues discoursing on the wickedness of kings.[2]

The popular outcry against the corn laws had more immediate effects. In 1770, the edict allowing the free exportation of wheat was again repealed, and, notwithstanding Turgot's efforts, commerce in grain continued subject to the caprice of ministers and superintendents almost as much under Louis XVI. as under Louis XIV. and Colbert; partial and local famines still continued frequent, and did their part towards increasing popular discontents and fanning the revolutionary feeling in 1789.

Protective and paternal theories were no longer in vogue, and Choiseul was well inclined to many of the measures demanded by the political economists. Not only was increased freedom allowed in the movement of grain, but some changes were made in the cumbersome regulations by which the progress of manufacturing industries had long been retarded. The character of this class of legislation is illustrated by the struggle that took place over the use of printed cali-

[1] They found credence among the more intelligent as well. *Reg. du parlement*, Normandy, 1768.

[2] This tradition rests on no foundation. I cannot express my own views better than by quoting from M. Clement, *Silhouette et les derniers fermiers généraux*. "Quant à Louis XV., jusqu'a production d'une preuve evidente, certaine, le reproche qu'on lui a fait, d'avoir agioté sur les blés ne parait pas plus fondé que le crime, dont on l'accuse aussi d'avoir fait enlever et égorger de jeunes enfants pour renouveler par le transfusion d'un sang jeune et généreux, son sang appauvri et corrumpu."

coes. Not only was their manufacture forbidden in France, but their use was prohibited. The motive alleged for this regulation was to protect the manufacturers of silk and woolen goods from ruin; its effect was to prevent the community from using a material that was cheap, convenient, and popular. If people are allowed to use these calico cloths, said writers like Forbonnais, who represented the traditions of Colbert in legislation, the manufacturers of woolen goods will be ruined; their factories will be closed, their workmen will be left idle, and will be thrown on the community for support.[1] It is a strange industry, replied the opponents of such measures, which thrives by prohibiting the use of goods that are cheap and serviceable, and are desired by the community; if these manufactories can only prosper when thus protected, would it not be better for the state to allow them to close, and let their workmen occupy themselves in making cotton cloths?[2]

The laws on this subject savored of the ferocious severity of the time. Persons selling cotton goods could be sent to the galleys, and heavy penalties were imposed upon those who used them; if a woman was found with a dress of the prohibited material, the officers were directed to tear it from her back; all persons entering the gates of Paris could be rigorously searched, to see if they were smuggling the forbidden article. These prohibitions upon the use of cotton goods were constantly evaded, and the severity of the laws hindered their execution. Occasionally, some

[1] *Examen des avantages et des désavantages de la prohibition des toiles peintes*, 1755.

[2] Reply of Gournay; *Reflexions sur les avantages de la libre fabrication et de l'usage des toiles peintes;* Morellet, 1758.

wretch was sent to the galleys for dealing in cotton goods, but on the whole, the smugglers did a profitable business, and the community paid the increased price required to compensate them for the dangers they incurred. Enterprising merchants devoted themselves to smuggling and selling the desired articles, and few were punished; women wore calico prints and India goods in the streets without having them stripped from their backs by some zealous official.

As is usually the case with legislation of which the execution is difficult, its advocates said the only remedy was to make it more severe; officials must be authorized to enter private houses and ransack them in search of the prohibited articles; those who bought them must be punished equally with those who sold.[1] If such provisions were enforced, said another writer, there would be abundance for the officials to do; not to speak of humbler houses, there was not a château in which calico and Indian wares could not be found in use; they were worn openly on the streets of Paris; these laws were disregarded even by those who made them; at the château of the king's mistress at Bellevue, not only were Indian goods in use, but there was not a piece of furniture in the establishment which did not infringe some regulation.[2] Though the laws against calico prints had long been extensively evaded, few thought of questioning their policy or demanding their repeal. But soon after 1750, when economic subjects began to excite interest, an active contest went on in books and pamphlets on the question of calicoes. The prohibition of their use was unpopular, and as soon as writers were found to suggest that

[1] *Examen*, etc., cited above.

[2] *Cor. Lit.*, October, 1755; Morellet, *Mém.*, 44.

French manufactures might not be destroyed if the people were allowed to dress themselves according to their tastes and their purses, there was a general demand for the repeal of such legislation. As the repeal became probable, the manufacturers were vigorous in their protests; in 1758, delegates came from Lyons, and Rouen, and Tours, to declare that if printed calicoes were allowed to be used, their factories would be closed and France would be ruined. A little earlier such arguments would have been efficacious, but now the tendency, even among the ministers, was towards a more liberal legislation. The desire for liberty and the new appreciation of its charms affected all classes, and led them to believe that the state could continue to prosper though calico prints were made and worn, and that it might prosper all the more.

In 1758, the law forbidding the use of these goods was repealed, and they were allowed to be imported or manufactured, subject to a moderate duty. The community was benefited, a new industry was founded, the dealers in silk and woolen goods were not obliged to close their factories, nor were their workmen idle. A few years later, they were selling more than they ever had before; the only sufferers were a considerable body of contrabandists, who had long carried on a profitable business in smuggling cotton goods.

Choiseul was as ready for a vigorous foreign policy as for changes and improvements in internal administration. His zeal was nearly allied to rashness, and he narrowly escaped involving France in wars for which she was by no means prepared. "Choiseul," said Frederick, who indeed judged him harshly, as he judged all French ministers, "was devoured by ambition and wished to give éclat to his ministry. . . .

His unquiet spirit delighted in spreading trouble in every court." [1]

If the minister sometimes dealt rashly with serious questions, the king was often quite as reckless. During the last twenty years of his life, Louis XV. occupied himself with a private diplomacy, which was concealed from his regular advisers, and was among the many curious features of his reign. Louis was not destitute of sagacity, and his views of foreign policy were usually judicious; but partly from listlessness, partly from timidity, this absolute sovereign was unwilling to overrule decisions of which he disapproved. Apparently, as a consolation for his insignificance in his councils, the king had a diplomatic system of his own. In many European courts there were regularly accredited representatives of France, and there was also a more obscure agent, — sometimes a secretary of legation, sometimes a man with no official position, — who corresponded secretly with the king, and whose instructions were often in direct opposition to those emanating from the foreign office in the king's name. Such a system naturally came to nothing; its only results were that the influence of France was frequently neutralized by conflicting instructions, and that Louis was at times plunged into the greatest anxiety lest his secret operations should come to the knowledge of his own ministers. Curiously enough, this monarch who had the right to choose and remove his advisers according to his own caprice, and whose authority was as absolute as that of the czar of the Russias, was in abject fear lest he should have to face his own servants with an acknowledgment of the orders he had seen fit to issue; his feel-

[1] *Mém.*, ii. 328, 340.

ings were those of a mischievous boy who has been caught at his tricks.

Hardly had the treaty of Paris been signed when Count Broglie, who had charge of these mysterious intrigues, prepared an elaborate plan for the invasion of England; it was not indeed intended for immediate execution, but measures were to be taken which should at last result in the overthrow of perfidious Albion. To this document the king, who played at politics almost with the heedlessness of a child, at once set his signature of approval. Such idle plans would have been harmless if they had been kept locked in the secret drawers of the council chamber, but the king had an agent of his own in England, and the Chevalier d'Eon, who was attached to the French embassy in London, was selected as a discreet person for this tortuous diplomacy, and charged with the responsible duty of communicating directly to Louis whatever might be important for the preparation of these schemes of revenge. Eon soon attracted the attention of all Europe by his extravagances. His conduct compelled his removal from his position in the embassy, and he in turn showed the marks of an ill-regulated mind in his efforts to revenge himself on the French ambassador.

Such absurdities were more annoying than dangerous, but to this most indiscreet of diplomats had been intrusted the plans which Broglie and Louis had so lightly prepared for revenge on England. The chevalier was insane from rage, he was in great need of money, and he was on friendly terms with members of the opposition who had denounced Bute for betraying English interests in the treaty of Paris. Should Eon decide alike to revenge himself and to fill his purse by

selling the papers he held, with what force would the opposition make their attacks, if they could prove to the world that hardly was the ink dry upon the treaty, when the French king had approved a plan for the invasion of England, and sent secret agents to assist in preparing the success of such a scheme. Would not public opinion compel a declaration of war upon so perfidious a sovereign?

Louis's anxiety was very great, not apparently lest his culpable folly should involve France in a new war, but lest his own ministers might discover these secret cabals. He was appalled at the prospect of meeting his servants at the council table with an admission of the intrigues in which he had been engaged; he was as fearful of the compromising papers coming into the hands of Choiseul as of their coming into the hands of Chatham. Choiseul and his associates, on the other hand, were jealous of Broglie, and quite willing to discover the intrigues by which the king and his secret advisers sought to interfere with the foreign policy of the government. They arrested some of the suspected agents, and sought to lay hands on any papers which might reveal the real principals for whom they had acted. At last Louis was forced to put some stop to such proceedings, but even then he did not venture to give an order to his own minister. Instead of this, he interviewed the subordinates charged with the examination of the agents under arrest, and, by solicitation rather than command, checked any indiscreet inquiry. "I confided the whole matter to him," wrote the king of his interview with one of these officials, "and I think this pleased him."[1] As Broglie says, a writer of comedies would

[1] Louis to Tercier, January 16, 1765.

hesitate to place in the mouth of an absolute sovereign language as humble as that which Louis used when talking with a police officer.

The solicitations even of a timorous king were not apt to be disregarded. Choiseul did not wish to press his master too closely, for, timid as Louis was, he might turn at last. After much diplomacy, Eon consented to return the compromising papers to Louis himself on receiving a pension of twelve thousand livres a year; from all this shady transaction, he was the only one that reaped any profit.[1] Louis sometimes jested about his lack of influence in his own government: it was perfectly true that he had none; his character was so indolent, his conduct, when he sought to take any part in public affairs, was marked by such levity, that an absolute monarch was really one of the most unimportant members of the administration.

In the latter years of Louis XV.'s reign, France was no longer the arbiter of the Continent, as she had been under his predecessor, but the intellectual and political ferment which was to operate so powerfully in Europe was already in full activity. The internal development of the country during Choiseul's administration was as interesting as its external policy was unimportant; the expulsion of the Jesuits was effected by the same desire to break with old traditions that rebelled against the commercial and economical beliefs of the past.

Some events of importance, though in time they followed the overthrow of Jesuit influence in France, may properly first be noticed.

[1] A full and agreeable account of this curious affair is given in Broglie's *Le secret du roi*, based upon Louis's secret correspondence.

In 1764, Mme. de Pompadour ended her extraordinary career; she was only forty-two, but she had long been in failing health, and she now met her fate with a courage worthy of a better woman. Louis regretted her death as much as he regretted anything, which was very little. He did not make the brutal remark so often attributed to him; he watched, with one or two straggling tears, the funeral cortége of her who had done so much to amuse and so much to debase him.[1]

It was thought a startling social innovation when the king selected from the bourgeoisie the favorite who was destined to exercise so great an influence in society and politics, and so indeed it proved to be. Neither Mme. de Pompadour's vices nor her virtues were those of the ancient aristocracy; on matters of more importance than fine points of etiquette she was a stranger to the life and thought of Versailles; she had grown up among men who protested against existing institutions, and in heart she always sympathized with them; she was the friend of Voltaire, she patronized Quesnay, she was the enemy of the Jesuits; if she did not obtain court favor for all those who advocated new theories of society and government, she exerted some influence in securing them toleration.

A judicial drama excited the popular mind more deeply than the death of a favorite who had ceased to be powerful. The famous Calas case showed the strong hold which a narrow bigotry still possessed

[1] The most trustworthy account of Louis's behavior is given by Cheverny. He was then in the king's service, and received his information directly from the official who stood by the king as the funeral passed. The remark attributed to him rests on no good authority.

on large portions of the community, while its results gave an impetus to the growing demand for a larger degree of religious toleration.

Jean Calas was a reputable tradesman living in Toulouse. He and his family were Protestants. Though the regulations against those of that faith were many and vexatious, they were not often enforced, and Calas had acquired a moderate property with little disturbance on account of his religious beliefs. His oldest son, Marc Antoine, was a young man of some promise, though his character seems to have been weak. He pursued his studies with the intention of becoming an advocate, and, having some talent as a speaker, he had great hopes of success in that avocation. In due time he applied for admission. The profession of the law was closed to those who did not profess adherence to the Catholic Church, but the severity of this provision was softened in practice by the laxity with which it was enforced. The applicant was obliged to produce the certificate of a priest as to his faith, but this was usually furnished with little inquiry as to the beliefs he really held. Marc Antoine applied to Abbé Boyer, the curé of St. Etienne, for his certificate, and would have obtained it without question if some servant of the curé had not remarked that Calas was a Protestant. Having been formally notified of the heresy of the applicant, the priest refused to sign the requisite paper.

Calas was exceedingly despondent when he found the profession in which he had hoped to obtain distinction and wealth suddenly closed to him. He became moody, wasting his time in billiard halls and idle amusements; having some talent for private theatricals, he delighted to perform the melancholy rôle

of Polyeucte, and he recited with much fire a translation of Hamlet's monologue on suicide. He made some efforts to enter business with his father, but they could not agree on terms. After his death he was declared by a superstitious populace to be a martyr to the faith, but apparently he was not inclined to renounce his Protestant beliefs, and he took no steps to improve his future prospects by declaring an adherence to Catholicism.

On the evening of October 13, 1761, a young man named Lavaysee stopped with the Calas family for supper. Marc Antoine joined in the meal with the others, but presently went out of the room. When Lavaysee left at about ten o'clock, he was accompanied to the entrance of the shop by a younger son of Calas, and noticing that the door into a side corridor stood open, they looked in, and found Marc Antoine hanging from a heavy pole, resting on the open wings, and quite dead.

It would seem impossible that upon such facts a man who had led a reputable life should be suspected of the horrid crime of murdering his son, but an ignorant official, hoping to gain credit with the government by displaying his zeal against heresy, at once ordered the whole family, together with their unfortunate guest, to be taken into close custody. Tolerant principles had made rapid progress in Paris, but bigotry was still strong in less enlightened portions of the kingdom. The population of Toulouse declared that Marc Antoine had been murdered by his parents because he had decided to profess the true faith, and that he died a martyr to Catholicism.

The judges before whom the father was tried were as bigoted as the populace, and if they had not been,

there were few who would have resisted the public sentiment, which clamored for the execution of a man who was declared to be a murderer as well as a heretic. The teachings of Calvin, said the prosecutors, authorized the parent to put to death a son who disobeyed his orders and adopted a new creed; Calas, as a zealous Protestant, had followed the teachings of a sect, the morality of which was as bad as its theology.

The prosecution assumed the air of a vindication of religion. A monitory read in the churches bade all persons who could show that Marc Antoine had become a convert to Catholicism, or could prove any threats made by his father, to appear before the court and give their evidence on pain of excommunication. The martyr, as he was regarded, was buried with an unprecedented display of religious pomp. If he had died a heretic he was not entitled to burial from the church; if he had died by his own hand the law forbade his being buried at all; but as it was assumed that he was a Catholic murdered by his father, the remains were carried to their resting-place with the utmost religious solemnity: forty priests and an immense cortége escorted the body; members of the order of Penitents, bearing candles in their hands, marched by the martyr's body. The remains were deposited in the church itself, and in one of the chapels was exhibited a figure of Marc Antoine holding the martyr's palm.

Calas had as little chance of an acquittal as a Jew tried before the Spanish Inquisition. He was allowed no counsel, and no evidence was too absurd to be received against him; witnesses were subjected to no cross-examination, and the depositions were reduced

to writing by officials resolved to obtain a conviction. It may be said that in all these particulars the trial of Calas differed little from most criminal prosecutions in the French courts. His wife and the visitor were acquitted, the son was banished, and Jean Calas was unanimously condemned to death by the Capitouls, before whom the case was first heard, and the Parliament of Toulouse, to its indelible shame, affirmed the sentence. Calas, his wife, and his son had already been tortured to force them to confession. The old man, now sixty-three years of age, was again tortured before his execution, in the hope of compelling an acknowledgment of his guilt; water was poured down his throat, he was twisted with ropes and squeezed with irons, but in all this barbarous procedure he preserved his calmness and denied the crime. At last he was taken to the scaffold, and the executioner broke his bones and left him on the wheel to die.[1]

Calas was not the only man who has been put to death by the ignorance of his judges, or fallen a victim to the bigoted prejudices of the populace; the extraordinary feature of the Calas tragedy came after the unfortunate old man had been tortured to death. His son fled to Switzerland, his daughters were taken from their mother and put in convents in order to secure their conversion; the widow had no courage to ask relief from courts in which she believed an unfriended Protestant could not hope for justice.

The Calas affair would soon have been forgotten, had it not been for a man who held in Europe a position such as has been occupied by no one before or since. Voltaire was then living by the shores of Lake Leman, finding in the Swiss republic a secur-

[1] *Procès-verbal,* published by Coquerel.

ity of which he could be certain nowhere else. It would seem almost incredible that a man who was himself a fugitive, who could not with safety show himself at Paris, who had no favor at court, who was execrated by many as little better than an Antichrist, and whose only weapon was his pen, could obtain a reversal of the decree of a powerful tribunal, in a case which had strongly excited the feelings of the community, and in favor of a family of obscure adherents to a creed proscribed by law and viewed with little liking by the great majority of the French people. It is certain that no man in Europe but Voltaire could have done this, but he brought to the contest weapons more powerful than any minister or court could wield, a power of arousing public opinion such as few men have ever possessed. When Voltaire first heard of this affair, he accepted the version that was given to the world; he decided that Calas, in his bigoted Protestant zeal, had killed his son to prevent his becoming a Catholic. "We Catholics are not worth very much," the poet wrote, "but the Huguenots are worse, and, besides, they declaim against the drama."[1]

But he soon gave to a case that attracted his imagination the closest study; he obtained information from every side; he sent for young Calas and examined him carefully to see if the version of the family would bear the test of a rigorous cross-examination. When at last he was convinced that Calas had fallen a victim to the prejudices of the community, he resolved that the wrong should be made right so far as it was now possible. He induced the widow to come to Paris to ask for the return of her children, and the reversal of an unjust judgment; he supplied money

[1] Voltaire to Le Bault, March, 1762.

for the cause; he stirred into activity every one with whom his word had influence; most of all, by statements, couched in language of the wonderful clearness of which he was master, he exposed to the public the injustice of the procedure, the improbability that this old and respectable man should suddenly become a murderer of his offspring; he aroused sympathy for the unhappy woman who had first been deprived of her husband, and then robbed of her children by bigoted and ignorant judges.

These attacks excited the utmost indignation in the Parliament of Toulouse and among the community which had clamored for Calas's death. With any other advocate than Voltaire, the lonely Protestant would have wasted a lifetime without obtaining redress. But there was no king and no government which could treat with unconcern a cause of which Voltaire had become the spokesman. St. Florentin, the minister of religious affairs, had taken less interest in the Calas prosecution than the officials of Toulouse; still, he had not interfered; doubtless he felt that at worst an obscure Protestant would suffer, who was guilty of heresy if he was not guilty of murder, and after he had perished on the scaffold, no more would be heard of the matter. It was a very different question when not only France, but all Europe was discussing the iniquity of the procedure, and declaring the innocence of the victim. Neither ministers, nor the influence of the Parliament, nor the zeal of fervent Catholics who still believed Calas guilty, could withstand the popular excitement aroused by the unwearied zeal of Voltaire. The matter was brought before the privy council, and in 1764, the sentence of the Toulouse court was reversed. The case was then heard anew

before the court in Paris, and Jean Calas was declared an innocent man, the daughters were restored to their mother, and the king granted a moderate allowance to the unfortunate family.

It was not only that an unjust sentence was righted, so far as this was possible, but the excitement over the Calas tragedy was a notable triumph for the cause of toleration in France, and was not without effect in hastening the repeal of the odious laws enacted against the members of the oppressed creed. It was with good cause that, when Voltaire visited Paris more than twenty years later, amid all the exclamations that he heard from the enthusiastic populace, none gratified him more than the cry, "That is the man who saved the family of Calas." [1]

The action of the government in the Calas case was a triumph for principles of religious toleration, but an event of far greater significance now absorbed public attention. The overthrow of the order, which for more than a century had in large part controlled the policy of the Gallican church, was the most important change that France witnessed during a period as full of change as the administration of Choiseul.

[1] Voltaire's voluminous correspondence and his many publications in reference to the Calas affair are found in *Œuvres Complètes*. Most of the documents have been published, and the literature of the case is considerable. The guilt of Jean Calas has been insisted upon even by recent writers. Bastard d'Estang, in his work on the Parliament of Toulouse, gives a good summary of the arguments to support this theory. They would not convince an impartial jury.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE EXPULSION OF THE JESUITS.

THE Company of Jesus met with long and bitter opposition in France, yet it finally exercised as great an influence in that country as in any other European kingdom. It was on the hill of Montmartre, that overlooks the city of Paris, and upon which the great church of the Sacred Heart is now the most conspicuous object, that, in 1534, Ignatius Loyola and his six comrades took their vow to renounce this world's goods and to devote themselves to the salvation of others, and this self-consecration resulted in the organization of the order of Jesuits. The society met with no friendly reception when, some ten years later, it applied for leave to establish its schools and its ministries in France, for the adherents of Gallican principles saw in this papal militia their most dangerous enemies. Already the Gallican church had manifested that opposition to papal control in which, though with varying success, it long persevered: it stubbornly refused to accept the decrees of the council of Trent, and it entertained an equal distrust of doctrines and of orders which came from beyond the Alps. The Parliament of Paris was the zealous advocate of similar principles; indeed, the judges were often more Gallican than the bishops, more jealous of the independence of the French church than were the ecclesiastical dignitaries who met in its councils. From the first, the Parliament exhibited an antipathy towards

the Jesuits, which was curious, when on the one side was a body of lawyers and on the other an order of priests.

When the Jesuits applied for admission to France, the Parliament at once began the contest which was to last for two centuries, and the University and the clergy of Paris joined in the opposition. But the Jesuits were not men to be easily discouraged, and a few years later they were allowed to enter the kingdom, though on terms that were little in accord with the policy of their society. They were not received as an authorized religious order; they could open their schools, but they were required to submit themselves to the authority of the diocesan bishops. The members of the society troubled themselves little about these conditions; they established their schools and took an active part in education; they gained the confidence of those who had power in the state, continued in implicit obedience to the heads of their order, and gave very little attention to any directions of the bishops.

Their influence increased, and they manifested in efforts to check the growth of the reformed party the same activity in France as in Germany. In the religious wars of the sixteenth century the order played a conspicuous part; they were the allies of the Guises, they fanned the zeal of the League, and they refused to recognize Henry of Navarre as king of France while he remained unreconciled with the church.

Such conduct was sure to make enemies; in France as elsewhere the Jesuits were charged with knowing no scruples in the pursuit of their ends, and the Gallicans regarded them with little more favor than did the Protestants. When the victories of Henry IV.

had secured him the crown, his followers turned their attention to an order which had labored so zealously for his enemies, and proceedings were taken to secure their expulsion as tools of Spain and teachers of immoral doctrines.

These efforts would probably have failed had it not been for the crime of a fanatic, who claimed to have acted in conformity with their teachings. In 1594, Jean Chastel, a former pupil of a Jesuit school, attempted to murder the king, and in his defense he declared that by killing an infidel monarch he hoped to do God service, and that the lawfulness of such a deed had been taught him by his Jesuit instructors. It was in vain that they protested; during the civil wars they had often advocated measures which differed little from that which Chastel had attempted, and, in 1594, they were expelled from France and declared to be corrupters of youth and the enemies of king and state.

This edict was not enforced throughout the kingdom, and it was soon repealed. Henry felt that it was better to have the friendship than the animosity of a body alike powerful and unscrupulous, and, in 1603, they were allowed to return to France. Not only did they receive this indulgence, but one of their order was selected by Henry as his confessor. The skeptical Bernese was not a sovereign over whom any confessor would exercise a large influence; he desired some one who would not insist on too rigorous a morality, and in return he treated the order with liberality, and even with a certain degree of favor.

The position which the Jesuits thus obtained they kept until their final overthrow a century and a half later. In France, as in other Catholic countries, they

exercised the influence which could be gained by a body of able men, united by an active zeal for a cause in which they strongly believed, largely controlling the education of the young, and peculiarly fitted to act as the spiritual advisers of those who wished to secure a place in heaven without resigning too many of the pleasures of earth. Almost without exception, the confessors of the French kings were Jesuits, and there were few of those ghostly counselors who did not seek to be temporal as well as spiritual directors. A Jesuit confessor endeavored to destroy Richelieu's favor with Louis XIII.; a Jesuit confessor had much to do with inducing Louis XIV. to revoke the Edict of Nantes; they were active in procuring bishopries for their friends, and in closing the paths of preferment to their enemies.

Though they were well intrenched in the favor of the great, there was always a strong opposition to the Society of Jesus among the middle classes in France. In 1614, at the last session of the States General before the Revolution, the third estate protested against the doctrines held by the Jesuits as to the papal power, and denounced the casuists, who taught that unbelieving kings might lawfully be deposed. Later in the century, the opposition to the order found its most active supporters among the followers of Jansenius. The quarrels between the rigid creed of the Jansenists and the more elastic tenets of the Jesuits raged in France with varying degrees of polemic acerbity for more than a century, and the expulsion of the Society of Jesus marked the final victory of its enemies. Doctrines of predestination and free will were debated between the doctors of the two parties; the propositions of Jansenius were condemned

by the Pope, while the orthodoxy of his teachings was maintained by his followers; but it was not on these grounds that Paris and the Parliament were steadfast in their support of the Jansenist cause. Opposition to the Jesuits was not based upon their doctrinal beliefs but upon their practical teachings, and Pascal in his "Provincial Letters" did more to prepare their overthrow than Arnauld in the forty volumes in which he discussed questions that few cared about and still fewer understood. Pascal attacked the society where it was vulnerable, in the shifts it made to use the weapons of the flesh in the cause of the spirit, in its endeavors to minister alike to saint and sinner, and to content itself with a relaxed morality where it could not enforce a pure morality.

Apparently the assaults of Pascal failed and victory remained with his opponents. The "Provincial Letters" were put on the Index at Rome and burned by the hangman at Paris; never did the Jesuits exercise so large an influence on French politics as during the latter part of Louis XIV.'s reign; they had the satisfaction of securing the devastation of the abbey of Port Royal, which had furnished a retreat to their most bitter and most famous enemies, of seeing its buildings destroyed, its living inmates expelled, and its dead exhumed. But no religious body has retained its power when the community believed it ready to make compromises with irreligious conduct, and such a belief, not altogether unjust, the French held as to the Society of Jesus.

In 1713, the Jesuits induced Clement XI. to issue the famous bull Unigenitus, in which one hundred and one propositions found in the "Moral Reflections" of Quesnel were declared to be heretical. Nothing

would have seemed less likely to arouse the public mind in the eighteenth century than disputes over sufficient, or efficacious, or preventing grace. Questions of this nature had once stirred the populace of Antioch, but such theological subtleties did not interest Parisians in the age of Louis XV., and yet the struggle over the acceptance of the Unigenitus raged with virulence for half a century. It was not, indeed, over these doctrinal quibbles, but over questions of deeper interest that the community was divided. Paris and the Parliament protested against the bull, not that they cared about Jansenist dogmas, but because they were opposed to Jesuit practices. It was hardly in keeping with the judicious methods of the Society of Jesus to attach great importance to abstract tenets, and only their animosity towards the Jansenists led them to show such zeal in the condemnation of their doctrines. The endless disputes over the Unigenitus are of no interest now; most of the higher clergy sympathized with the Jesuits, the government compelled the registration of the Unigenitus, and the Parliament constantly protested against it.

The quarrel assumed a more serious aspect when the last sacraments were refused those who would not acknowledge the authority of the bull. Under the influence of Jesuit advisers, many of the bishops were filled with zeal for persecution, and the methods of harassing the recalcitrant, devised by the Archbishop of Paris and his brethren, were extraordinary instances of the resources of theological bigotry. The church has always taught the necessity of the sacraments to the dying sinner, and believing friends deemed it of infinite importance to obtain the last offices of religion for one about to render his final

account. This form of persecution was therefore specially painful to the faithful, while skeptics said that the teachers of religion declared the Almighty would grant salvation only to those who defined grace like a Jesuit, and would condemn to endless tortures those who defined predestination like a Jansenist.

In the quarrels between the bishops and the judges the attitude of the government was marked by its habitual indecision; having for its object to quiet the wrangling factions, it succeeded only in keeping them constantly embroiled. The Parliament condemned curés to temporal penalties for refusing the sacrament, their spiritual superiors threatened them with excommunication if they administered it, and the government irritated bishops and judges by turn. Whatever was to be the outcome of such quarrels, no one would have prophesied the speedy overthrow of the order of the Jesuits in France. The society seemed as firmly intrenched in power as at any period of the past; the confessors of the king, the queen, the dauphin, and of most of those possessed of rank or wealth, were Jesuits. To their influence nine tenths of the French bishops owed their appointment; the queen viewed the members of the order with special favor, the dauphin was known to be entirely under their influence, the king liked neither Jansenists nor Parliaments, and regarded with good will the objects of their dislike.

But in the public mind distrust of this powerful order was strong, and the Parliament in its hostility to the Jesuits was sure of popular support. Formerly the Jesuits had been renowned for worldly wisdom, but now the mistakes of those holding authority in the society brought on a speedy overthrow

which surprised their enemies as well as their friends. Religious as well as political institutions had become brittle in France, and they were broken to pieces with marvelous ease when the attempt was made.

Loyola had prescribed vows of poverty for his followers, but these had not been rigorously observed, and the Jesuits often lessened their spiritual influence by the zeal they showed as men of business. Their activity in the work of missions, one of the most honorable chapters in the history of the order, furnished opportunities for mercantile enterprises, and the salvation of souls and the accumulation of wealth for the society went hand in hand. In all the foreign possessions of France the Jesuits had been active; their zeal had often been shown in heroic self-sacrifice, in a devotion that faced death and torture unappalled, in an enthusiasm to spread the good tidings among the heathen worthy of the apostolic age; it had sometimes appeared in a narrow bigotry that checked colonization and dwarfed development, and in a desire for gain as eager and as unscrupulous as that of any half-breed trapper who cheated Indians by the Great Lakes, or any captain of a slaver who kidnapped negroes on the Guinea coast. It was no act of unscrupulous policy, no plot to do away with some heretical monarch, no endeavor to control the policy of a timid or unwilling Pope, but a paltry commercial bankruptcy which caused the ruin of the order founded by Ignatius Loyola; among all the causes which might have wrought its overthrow, this would have been the most galling to him.

The French had a colony at Martinique, which enjoyed a certain degree of prosperity; its population was about eighty thousand, of whom eleven thousand

were white, and in 1755, nearly four hundred ships conveyed cargoes to and from the island.[1] The Jesuit mission at Martinique came in time to be a commercial house rather than a centre for religious teaching, and for forty years it carried on a considerable trade in the island. This had not been altogether prosperous, and a new man was needed to direct the enterprise. In 1747, Father Lavalette was made the superior, in recognition of the business qualities which he had displayed. He proved worthy of the confidence of his principals: he established a bank in the island; he paid off the debts of the mission; his correspondents were found in many great commercial cities; magnificent buildings were erected on the lands of the society; ships carrying cargoes loaded by him were on every sea; he dealt in sugar and coffee and slaves, in all that the island needed or could supply.

The extent and the success of Lavalette's operations excited the envy of other merchants, and he was recalled by the French government to answer the charge of engaging in enterprises forbidden those of his calling. He promised to abstain, but on his return to Martinique the business of the mission went on with its usual activity.

Among the results of the war between England and France, not the least important was that indirectly it caused the overthrow of the Jesuit order. Lavalette drew bills to the amount of a million and a half livres on the Lioncys, his correspondents at Marseilles, against merchandise which he had shipped from Martinique, and they accepted the drafts. War had not been declared between France and England, but English cruisers were scouring the seas in search of ships

[1] Dessalles, *Histoire des Antilles*, t. v.

floating the French flag, and the cargoes of Lavalette fell into their hands. The bills came due, and the merchandise which would furnish the funds to meet them was not at hand. In their distress, the merchants asked the heads of the society to take up the drafts. It would have been the part of wisdom to settle the matter and avoid the publicity and the scandal which such a failure would excite among a public ready to believe evil of an unpopular order. But the wisdom of the serpent was no longer found in their councils, and every step taken was a mistake. They declared that Lavalette was operating on his individual account, and the society was not responsible for his acts or his debts. The Lioncys were compelled to go into bankruptcy, and their creditors refused to accept the loss quietly. They began proceedings against the order of Jesuits, claiming that the transactions of Lavalette were in behalf of the society as a whole, and that all of its property could be held for the acts of its agent. The consular court at Marseilles so decided. From this decision, an appeal might have been taken to the Grand Council, which had jurisdiction of questions affecting the order, and from that body, closely connected with the court and forming no part of the Parliament, they could confidently expect a friendly decision or indefinite delay. But it seemed that the gods wished the destruction of the Jesuits and had made them mad; some of the members advised that the appeal be taken to the Parliament of Paris; though that great judicial body had been hostile in the past, it would be flattered, so they declared, by this mark of confidence in its judicial integrity; and the justness of the position taken by the society, when pronounced by such a

tribunal, would vindicate it before the world. In an evil hour this reasoning prevailed, and the matter was brought before the Grand Chamber of the Parliament of Paris.

If the judges needed any stimulus to sharpen a hostility of two centuries, it would have been furnished by the clamor of the public. The cause came on to be heard in April, 1761; the great hall in which the court sat was filled to overflowing by an excited audience, which applauded vociferously any ruling unfavorable to the Jesuits. Even the counsel for the creditors begged his auditors to restrain their ardor and listen with quiet respect to the decisions of the oracles of justice. His request was not always respected. The property of the Jesuits, said their counsel, was used for training the young in learning and piety. As he uttered the word "piety," the audience burst into exclamations and protests.

The judges held that before they could decide whether the society was liable for Lavalette's acts, they must examine the constitution under which it was organized. Accordingly the Jesuits produced their statutes contained in two great volumes; all the rules and precepts governing the order of Loyola were disclosed to a public eager to know them and ready to put upon them the worst construction.

The Parliament decided that under its organization, the society as a whole was liable for Lavalette's debts, and directed that its property, wherever situated, should be sold to satisfy the claims of creditors.[1]

But questions had now arisen far more important

[1] A good account of this litigation is given in the journal of Barbier. *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, for 1761, contain very full, though very biased, accounts of these proceedings.

than the right of a creditor to sell a house of the Jesuits in Paris to satisfy a bill drawn in Martinique; their statutes were before the Parliament, and that body assumed a vague and extended jurisdiction over questions that affected the spiritual as well as the temporal welfare of the kingdom; it was not alone for it to consider the pecuniary responsibilities of members of the order, but to see also if the rules governing them were in conformity with morality, to decide whether they could properly be allowed to teach the young and guide the mature.

Already a great blow had been dealt the society. In no country had the Jesuits exercised a larger influence than in Portugal; for almost two centuries, they had enjoyed the favor of the Portuguese kings, they had controlled the education of the young, they had directed the religious and often the temporal policy of the kingdom. One resolute and unscrupulous man succeeded in breaking their power. The Marquis of Pombal obtained entire ascendency over the weak Joseph I., and as the Jesuits sided with his enemies, he resolved on their overthrow. He acted with equal energy and cruelty, and he was as free from scruples as any Jesuit that ever plotted the death of a king for the good of the church. In 1759, Pombal succeeded in expelling the order from Portugal; their property was confiscated; Father Malgrida, one of the chiefs of the society, was condemned by the Inquisition for heresy, and burned at the stake. It was no progress in toleration to burn a Jesuit at an auto-da-fé instead of a Jew, but the overthrow of the order in Portugal encouraged its enemies elsewhere.

The judges of the Parliament of Paris, having

passed upon the rights of Lioncy's creditors, now applied themselves to a diligent study of the rules laid down by Loyola and his successors for the government of the Society of Jesus. Its friends were alarmed at the danger which threatened its very existence, and an endeavor was made to check the attacks of the Parliament. The king directed that the statutes should be submitted to him, and, pending his examination of them, he ordered the Parliament for a period of twelve months to take no further steps in the matter.[1] In the days of Louis XIV., the Parliament of Paris would not have ventured to disobey the express mandate of the sovereign, but with the increasing weakness of Louis XV.'s government, its commands were treated with less and less respect.

In defiance of the royal will, the Parliament forthwith pronounced two lengthy decrees; basing its action upon passages found in Jesuit writers, which had received the approval of the society, and had furnished Pascal the material for his "Provincial Letters," the court directed that these works should be burned by the hangman as destructive of every principle of Christian society; it further forbade the subjects of the king to enter the order, and enjoined the closing of all institutions of learning under the control of the Jesuits. These decrees practically suppressed the order in France, and, having made them, the Parliament consented to register the king's mandate, with the modification that any delay should be for six months instead of a year.[2]

Even those who hated the Jesuits admitted that the Parliament was assuming the prerogatives of a sov-

[1] *Déclaration*, August 2, 1761; *Anc. lois françaises.*

[2] *Arrêt*, August, 1761; *Nouv. eccles.*, 1761, 211, 2.

ereign when it saw fit to dissolve a powerful religious society, from which for almost two centuries the kings of France had chosen their spiritual advisers, and every one expected that a decree would forthwith issue from the royal council, annulling these edicts of the court. No such decree came; Louis was friendly to the Jesuits and would gladly have saved them, but the government, with its usual listlessness, had allowed the matter to drift until public feeling was greatly excited, and it was now too late to restrain it. While some of the king's advisers urged him to interfere and save the order from the ignorant animosity of the populace, others suggested that it might be dangerous to offend the courts and the community on a question where feeling ran so strong. Though the government of Louis XV. used language as absolute in form as that of Louis XIV., it was far from being as absolute in reality. The king decided to sacrifice the order to their enemies; the overthrow of the Jesuits was forced by the public against the wish of the monarch, and such an event was a harbinger of new political relations.[1]

There were, moreover, two persons of great influence with the king, who looked on the society with unfriendly eyes: Choiseul and Mme. de Pompadour bore no love to the Jesuits. The society had incurred the favorite's ill will by conduct that did not savor of the undue leniency of which it was often accused. When Mme. de Pompadour ceased to be the king's mistress to become his confidential adviser, she applied to the Jesuits to recognize her changed position, and relieve the king from any penalties incurred by

[1] "Pour la paix de mon royaume je les renvoie contre mon gré," etc. Louis to Choiseul.

his past conduct. Her presence at the court, she said, was now free from scandal, and was of great importance to the king. Louis had himself declared, she wrote, "that I was necessary for his happiness and for the good of his affairs; that I alone dared tell him the truth." His friendship for her, she continued, furnished the sweetness of his life, and his confidence in her assured its tranquillity. She demanded, therefore, that her presence should no longer be alleged as a reason for refusing to the king the sacraments, for which, "penetrated with the truths and the duties of religion," he greatly longed.[1]

The Jesuits were not always lenient to the weaknesses of the great; whether actuated by a rigid piety, or by a desire to please the royal family by showing no indulgence to the favorite, they now refused to recognize Louis's position as morally satisfactory unless Mme. de Pompadour were removed from the court. She did not leave, and she bore them a grudge for the stand they had taken.

Choiseul's hostility to the order rested on different grounds. He has been regarded as one of the chief actors in the expulsion of the Jesuits, but in reality he did not take an active part, and only after the impulse had been given by the Parliament did he concern himself with the affairs of the society. He had for the Jesuits the mild contempt of a great seigneur, who was tinctured with Voltairean views; as a professor of the new philosophy, he was bound to regard the members of this order as organs of superstition, upon whom the sage looked down. He incurred their ill will when minister at Rome by his conciliatory course in the disputes about the Unigenitus, but he

[1] *Manuscrits de Choiseul*, published by Saint Priest.

took no part in inciting Pombal to his crusade against the Jesuits in Portugal, or in fomenting the hostility of the Parliament of Paris; that body, indeed, needed no one to increase its zeal. When it became evident that the Parliament was resolved upon the entire overthrow of the Jesuits, neither Choiseul nor Mme. de Pompadour felt inclined to undertake a contest with the judges in behalf of the priests, and the king was guided by their advice. Accordingly, no royal edict annulled the decrees of the Parliament, and Louis contented himself with taking some half-way measures in behalf of the order. The bishops were asked to give their opinion upon the statutes of the Jesuits, to assist the king in his own examination. There could be little doubt as to their decision: forty-five bishops were of the opinion that there was nothing to reproach in the doctrines or the conduct of the Jesuits, and that a body so useful to the cause of religion and authority should not be sacrificed to the animosity of the Parliament; only six ventured the suggestion that some changes in their constitutions might be made with advantage.

If the judgment of the bishops was intended to affect public opinion, it was a failure; the community cared nothing for the opinion of forty-five or any other number of bishops, and the king, after receiving their advice, decided to disregard it. As a final effort in behalf of the Jesuits a proposition was made to the heads of the order for various changes in their organization; if these could be adopted, it was intimated that their expulsion from France might be averted. Such attempts at compromise were futile; the Jesuits were not inclined to modify principles of action by which their order had become a great power, and it is

certain that the Parliament would not have discontinued its attacks, no matter what changes were made.[1]

In April, 1762, the six months of delay expired; the Parliament proceeded at once to enforce its decrees, and the king did not interfere. The property of the society was sold wherever it could be found; even the ornaments of their churches, and the beautiful paintings belonging to them, were sold at public auction by their zealous pursuers; the Jesuit schools were closed; the members were forbidden to wear the dress of the order, or to have any communication with their superiors.[2] The Jesuits attempted no resistance; the body which had seemed so powerful crumbled away before its assailants. The action of the Parliament of Paris was followed by the other Parliaments of France. Everywhere the Jesuit schools were closed; their property was seized, their members driven from their calling. The overthrow of the order was hailed by the community with an almost indecent joy. Its members had been so hated that they often met with insult in public; now pasquinades, songs, and parodies celebrated their downfall.[3]

Doubtless the Society of Jesus had much to answer

[1] These various measures are related in *Journal de Barbier*, *Nouvelles ecclésiastiques*, *Mercure Historique*, *Rapport de la Chalotais*, *Anciennes lois françaises*, *1761–67*, and very many contemporary pamphlets. The Venetian ambassador in his dispatches from 1761 to 1764, *MSS. Bib. Nat.*, gives a fair account. Many incidents, more or less authentic, are related in the memoirs of Bezenval, Choiseul, Georgel, du Hausset, etc.

[2] *Arrêt*, August 6, 1762, etc. The decree of August 6 fills sixty closely printed pages with lengthy recitals of the crimes and immoral teachings of the Jesuits.

[3] For instances of this feeling, see Bachaumont, Argenson, Barbier, etc.

for, but many priests of exemplary life suffered from an undiscriminating hostility, and many schools were closed in which sound learning and good morals had been assiduously taught. Some of the members found asylums at court or in private houses, but the lot of many of the humbler brothers was hard.

They waited for the storm to pass by, but they waited in vain. In 1764, a declaration of the king suppressed the order of Jesuits in France; the members were allowed to remain in the country, but only as private persons, subject to the ordinary religious authorities. The example set in France and Portugal was followed all over Europe; such an institution as that founded by Ignatius Loyola was out of place in the eighteenth century, and for that reason its fall was so sudden and so complete. In 1767, the Jesuits were expelled from Spain, with many circumstances of harshness and cruelty. Nearly six thousand priests of all ages and conditions were put on board ship and sent from the kingdom. Pope Clement XIII. was a friend of the order, and, acting under the advice of their general, he showed his disapproval of the acts of the Spanish king by refusing to receive the Jesuits thus sent into exile. This refusal did not disturb the king, but greatly added to the sufferings of the priests; a landing was attempted at Civita Vecchia, but the exiles were met with discharges of cannon, and the endeavor was abandoned. They fared no better elsewhere; the Spanish fleet cruised along the coast and sought to land its helpless freight at Leghorn and at Genoa, but was forbidden to do so; for almost six months the priests were kept on board, suffering from sickness, poor food, and crowded quarters, because it was impossible to find a place where they could dis-

embark. At last they obtained a refuge in Corsica, though the asylum which that barren island could afford was only a slight mitigation of their distress. The example of Spain was promptly followed; the Jesuits were expelled from Naples, Parma, Venice, and Bavaria; though Maria Theresa did not order their expulsion, she refused to give them any assistance.[1]

The Parliament of Paris now went a step further; in 1767, it declared the Jesuits public enemies, ordered them forthwith to leave the kingdom, and asked the king and all other Catholic princes to demand of the Pope the dissolution of the society. Both Choiseul and Charles III. were ready to heed this request, and in 1769, the French and Spanish ambassadors presented a formal demand for the suppression of the order to the aged Clement XIII., who had always been its friend. The old Pope died a few days later, and it was said that such a request, made by the great Catholic powers, actually frightened him out of life.

The question of the suppression of the Jesuits controlled the choice of his successor, but though Clement XIV. was regarded as the candidate of their enemies, he delayed long before gratifying their animosity. It was not strange that a Pope should hesitate to destroy an order which, for more than two centuries, had been the bulwark of the papacy; the promises Clement had given to secure his election he was slow to fulfill when in the chair of St. Peter. During four years the representatives of France and Spain continued their efforts to compel Clement to take a step which he

[1] Saint Priest, *Chute des Jesuites.* The correspondence of Choiseul and the French ambassador at Madrid, *Aff. Etr.*, shows how exaggerated is the part assigned to Choiseul in this transaction. He was a spectator instead of an instigator.

sought by every device to postpone. At last he could delay no longer. In July, 1773, appeared the bull, Dominus ac Redemptor; it declared that the Society of Jesus had given just cause for scandal, that it could no longer yield the abundant religious fruits which it had once produced, and the church could enjoy no true and solid peace while this order continued to exist, and it was therefore abolished.

Thus fell the great society founded by Ignatius Loyola. The members refused to acknowledge the authority of the bull and appealed to a future council, as their opponents had so often done when Jesuits controlled the policy of the Vatican. They received little aid from any Catholic country, and suffered much persecution. Frederick and Catherine alone among European sovereigns offered a refuge to the Jesuits; the followers of Loyola found with unbelievers a toleration which was denied them by the faithful.

In 1814, Pius VII. restored the order of the Jesuits; its members have since been received in some countries and excluded from others. But the present Society of Jesus, reduced in numbers and still more reduced in power, is only the pale shadow of its former self. The order which was actuated by the principles of Loyola, which governed the policy of kings and the councils of Popes, which feared no obstacles and hesitated at no difficulties, which aspired to control the Catholic world and did not altogether fail in its endeavor to do so, perished in the last century; the victory of the Parliament of Paris was complete and was final.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE ANNEXATION OF CORSICA.

THE most notable achievement of Choiseul's administration was the annexation of Corsica. It was an acquisition important in itself, because it secured for France an island in the Mediterranean of considerable size and inhabited by a hardy and warlike population, and it was still more important in its results, for by reason of it the energies of the greatest warrior of modern times found employment on the battlefields of Europe instead of in obscure vendettas.

The turbulent island of Corsica had been subject to Carthage and Rome, to the Vandals and the Pope, and in the fifteenth century, Genoa there established a rule which, with many interruptions, extended over three hundred years of almost constant disorder. The Corsicans were impatient of any authority, and the authority of the Genoese was tyrannically exercised. For the most part, the island was governed with no more regard for the welfare of its people than a Roman province in the hands of a proprætor, who sought to retrieve the expenses of his ædileship and to prepare for a contest for the consulate.

In the sixteenth century, Corsica for a brief time changed its allegiance. The armies of Henry II., then at war with Genoa, took possession of the island, and, in 1557, it was incorporated with the kingdom of France. The Corsicans were ready to join the French, who had not been their rulers, in order to be rid of

the Genoese, who had been, but the defeat of St. Quentin put an end to any schemes of French aggrandizement, and by the treaty of Cateau-Cambresis Corsica was returned to its former masters.

It was as allies of Genoa that the French next took an active part in Corsican affairs. The French kings professed themselves the friends and protectors of the Italian republic. At times, indeed, this patronage assumed an offensive form; when the authorities of Genoa declined to conform to the caprices of Louis XIV., he caused the city to be bombarded, and the doge was compelled to visit Versailles and offer the apologies of the republic for having offended the great king. But for the most part the relations between the two countries were friendly, and Genoa belonged to the large number of second-rate powers which received subsidies from France, and were expected to take part in her quarrels when required. These amicable relations led Genoa to ask her ally's assistance in dealing with her unruly subjects. Corsican impatience of Genoese misrule was manifested by constant disturbances, and in 1729 the inhabitants started a revolt which lasted for forty years, and finally destroyed the authority of Genoa.

The great days of the Ligurian republic were past, and in the decrepit condition into which she had sunk, it was impossible to assert her sovereignty over a hardy race of mountaineers, as courageous as they were indocile, and who would not submit to foreign rule, though they had shown little ability to rule themselves.

As the task of reducing Corsica to obedience seemed difficult, it was suggested that rights of small commercial value might profitably be disposed of, and the idea

of obtaining the island for France was considered by French diplomats. If it was to be sold, wrote the minister of foreign affairs in 1737, France would be a purchaser, and she could allow no other power to occupy so important a station in the Mediterranean.[1] Nothing came of this; the Genoese did not wish to sell the island, but they asked their French allies to come to their aid and restore the tranquillity which it was beyond their power to enforce. A favorable answer was made to this request, and in 1738 a French army landed in Corsica, charged with the duty of preserving order and securing the recognition of Genoa's authority upon such reasonable terms as would be satisfactory both to Corsican subjects and Genoese rulers.

The French army checked the progress of the insurrection, but they could secure no peaceable agreement; the Corsicans were bad subjects, the Genoese were bad rulers. The Corsicans had hated the Genoese for centuries, and the Genoese had disliked the Corsicans for the same length of time. In 1741, the French army was withdrawn, and as the Genoese could enforce their authority only over a few seaport towns, the Corsicans enjoyed a practical and a disorderly independence.

A new turn was given to Corsican affairs by the appearance of one of the extraordinary men to whom that island has given birth. Pascal Paoli was born in 1725; when only thirty, he was chosen by his countrymen as their general, and until the French conquest, he exercised absolute and unquestioned power over a turbulent and unruly people.

By the elevation of his character and the unselfish-

[1] Campredon to Chauvelin, February 14, 1737; Chauvelin to Campredon, March 5.

ness of his views, combined with good judgment and popular manners, Paoli silenced all jealousies, and inspired his followers not only with resolute courage, which they always had, but with a wise and self-sacrificing patriotism. He united the qualities of a leader with a zeal for liberal methods of legislation, more often found among tranquil students than insurgent generals; though Corsica had an intensely Catholic population, he advocated toleration; he recognized the efficacy of a rational and humane penal legislation, at a time when the cruel and absurd principles of the past were still in full force; while farmers-general were growing rich in France, Paoli sought in Corsica to establish a simple system of taxation, to lower taxes and collect them cheaply. Notwithstanding the unruly character of the men whom he commanded, his extraordinary qualities as a leader enabled him to enforce obedience, and to preserve order such as Corsica had not enjoyed for many years. The wrangles and petty jealousies of the principal families were silenced, the local Parliament or states met regularly, and, under Paoli's influence, adopted many wise measures; universities were founded, and endeavors made to lessen the deplorable ignorance which was almost universal. The suffrage was extended, and the undue influence of certain families was checked, for Paoli was no respecter of persons, and did not hesitate to advance even simple shepherds to posts of responsibility, when they showed capacity. In all this he seems to have been actuated by no desire to make himself the king or tyrant of the island; he sought for Corsica independence from the rule of strangers, and prosperity such as it had not known in the past.[1]

[1] *Cor. de Gênes*, t. 149, 150: 93, 150, *et pas.*

It is a curious proof of the extraordinary influence which Rousseau then held in Europe, that the Corsicans, of whom a goodly portion were banditti, whose island had been the classic ground for vendettas, and who pursued their family animosities with an inveteracy and a bitterness exceeding the Scotch Highlanders, should have asked the philosopher of Geneva to come among them and devise a constitution by which they should be virtuous and happy. It was, they said, for a legislator like him, who knew human nature to its foundation, to insure the felicity of a nation.[1] With better judgment than he sometimes showed, Rousseau declined the task; it is certain that no scheme of government prepared by the author of the "Social Contract" would have been adapted to the Corsican temperament and customs.

At the request of the Genoese, French troops had again been sent to Corsica, but they did no more than hold a few seaport towns, and during the Seven Years' war, even these garrisons were withdrawn. The Genoese were still unwilling to acknowledge the independence of the island, and when they once again appealed for aid in 1764, France was at peace, and Choiseul was quite ready to interest himself in any new venture which might divert attention from the disasters of the late war. Accordingly, in that year, a French army of about thirty-five hundred strong, under the command of the Count of Marbœuf, occupied Ajaccio and four other of the principal towns in the island. By the treaty made between the two countries, France agreed to secure to her ally the peaceable possession of these places, and she promised also to use her best efforts to obtain an honorable and satisfactory peace

[1] Buttafoco to Rousseau, August 31, 1764.

between Genoa and her revolted tributary.[1] The latter agreement would have been difficult to carry into effect, for the Corsicans were resolved to make no peace unless their independence was acknowledged, and the Genoese were equally resolved that the independence of the island they would never grant. In fact, the French troubled themselves very little with so unpromising a negotiation; they held the towns intrusted to them, and remained on equally good terms with their allies, the Genoese, and with Paoli and his followers, whose efforts to drive the Genoese out of Corsica they were supposed to hinder. Paoli was not foolish enough to make any attempts to seize the cities thus held by the French troops; on the contrary, he kept on friendly terms with the French general, and professed to regard France as the friend of Corsica as well as of Genoa. With the exception of the coast towns, Paoli and his followers now had practically undisputed possession of the island.

While the Genoese were loath to surrender the sovereignty which they had long held, they were powerless to enforce it, and they no longer attempted to suppress what they still designated as a rebellion. Not only were the Corsicans in peaceable possession of most of their own island, but they now attacked their former rulers on the sea. The days were long past when Genoa was one of the great maritime powers of the Mediterranean; the Genoese were now so weak that they could not defend against Corsican cruisers what little commerce they still carried on. Their small navy consisted chiefly in galleys. In former days, these had borne their part in great maritime victories, but they were now of little use against swift-sailing

[1] The treaty is found in *Cor. de Gênes*, 147, 116, *et seq.*

ships; as the Genoese explained to the French envoy, if they should attack some Corsican cruiser, the sea might become rough, and the men in the galleys would at once be obliged to row for shore to avoid capsizing. It was suggested that it might be well to abandon galleys, and to build a few frigates that would be in less danger in case of a high wind. But Genoa, like greater states, found the road to reform a difficult one; the senators were entitled to the use of galleys to convey them to their country homes or to their seats of government; such a usage was agreeable as a pompous display, and was convenient because the public paid for the expense. The Genoese nobles were unwilling to sacrifice their galleys, and the Corsican privateers continued their ravages with practical impunity.[1]

It was plain, also, that the few places on the island nominally subject to Genoa would renounce their allegiance the moment the French occupation was withdrawn. From Ajaccio, the home of the Buonapartes, a delegation visited Paoli to assure him that they would join the cause of their brethren as soon as this became possible, and like assurances came from other towns.[2] At the fête of Santa Devota, the patron saint of the island, at Bastia, the Corsican flag, instead of that of Genoa, floated from the boats in the bay, and the priest prayed for the speedy liberation of his country.[3]

[1] Michel to Praslin, October 21, 1765; to Choiseul, August 18, 1766. They were unwilling, he says of the nobles, to adopt "un parti convenable aux intérêts de la république, mais trop opposé aux préjugés et à la vanité de la pluspart des nobles Gênois."

[2] Michel to Praslin, November 4, 1765.

[3] Lettera di Bastia, *Cor. Gen.*, 150.

The French took no pains to conceal from their allies that Corsica was hopelessly lost to them; the marine greatness of Genoa, wrote the Duke of Praslin, was indeed departed if she could not protect her ships from Corsican privateers, while the expressions of sympathy with Paoli from such towns as Ajaccio and Bastia showed that she had no friends left on the island. The French therefore advised their allies to grant terms which amounted to a practical recognition of Corsican independence, but to this the Genoese would not consent. Not only did they insist on a nominal acknowledgment of their sovereignty, a moderate tribute, a delegation to be sent every ten years to recognize Genoa's supremacy, — to all of which the Corsicans might have agreed, — but they were resolved to hold as their own the cities in the occupation of the French, and to this Paoli would never consent.[1]

The term for which the French had agreed to guard these towns expired in 1768; it was evident that Genoa could not hold them when left to herself, and she applied for an extension of the French occupation. This request met with little encouragement. "The king," said Choiseul, "is unwilling to assume so onerous an obligation unless he receives some advantage from the Genoese, and we cannot suggest any compensation which they are in condition to offer." [2]

Though the Genoese had abandoned any effort to reduce Corsica to subjection, the insurgents proceeded on the offensive, and as they dared not attack the cities held by the French, they sent an expedition to the neighboring island of Carrera. The authorities at Genoa endeavored to defend the island, but

[1] *Cor. de Gênes, Aff. Etr.*, 1766 and 1767, *passim.*

[2] Choiseul to Michel, May 13, 1766.

they were unable to do so, and the garrison, after a three months' siege, was forced to surrender. "One can conjecture," wrote Choiseul, "that Corsica is more likely to conquer Genoa than is the republic to compel the Corsicans to submit to their former masters."[1]

The Genoese had been willing to let the matter drift along in hope of better fortune, but they were stirred to activity by the warlike vigor of the Corsicans, and both the doge and the senate were now thoroughly alarmed. Not only was their former tributary lost, but they feared that Corsica as an independent state would be a constant thorn in the flesh; to acknowledge its independence was not merely a blow to their pride, — and Genoa no more than Spain liked to recognize her fallen power, — but the Corsicans, flushed with victory, and with long arrears of hatred for their former masters, could threaten and harass them by sea and even on the main land. Rather than allow Corsica to become independent, the Genoese preferred to see it absorbed by some other power. In the summer of 1767, they tendered their rights over Corsica to France, and strongly pressed her to accept them. Corsica as a part of France, they said frankly, would be harmless; Corsica independent might be their ruin; and if France would not take the island, they would look elsewhere for some power that would do so.[2]

They had indeed little to transfer, but France had the power to make effective rights which Genoa was unable to enforce, and Choiseul resolved to accept the gift. There was some little question over the terms; the Genoese insisted that no town or city should be given to the insurgents; France must keep the whole

[1] Choiseul to Michel, July 29, 1766.

[2] Lettre de M. de Sorba, Genoese ambassador, July 4, 1767.

for herself. To this the French were willing to accede, but they were less willing to pay anything for an island which they would have to conquer in order to hold. "I gave them no hope," wrote the French envoy, discussing the Genoese demands for money, "although they advanced the most pressing and even the most pathetic arguments." [1]

In order to avoid giving offense to other powers, Choiseul decided not to accept the absolute cession which Genoa had offered, but to hold the island in pawn for the expenditures France would incur in its occupation. The Genoese were a little alarmed at this, lest finally they might be asked to pay the money instead of getting rid of the property, but they were soon convinced it was only a diplomatic form, that really changed nothing. On May 15, 1768, the treaty was signed by which France agreed to occupy Corsica and protect Genoa against any efforts of the insurgents. The French were to exercise an absolute sovereignty in the island until Genoa saw fit to repay the expenses caused by the occupation, and both parties knew that this reimbursement would only be tendered at the Greek Kalends. The pathetic demands of the Genoese for money had more effect on Choiseul than on his agent; he agreed to pay Genoa a subsidy for ten years, amounting in all to two million livres, and thus the bargain was closed.[2] So far as legal rights were concerned, the transaction was

[1] Boyer to Choiseul, April 9, 1768.

[2] The negotiations for the treaty are in lib. 151, 2, *Cor. de Gênes*. The treaty itself is entitled "Conservation de l'Isle de Corse à la République de Gênes." It is hard to see why Choiseul derived so much satisfaction from a pleasantry which deceived no one.

the same as if England, after the surrender at Yorktown, had transferred to some other power her rights over the thirteen colonies. Practically, however, the difference was great. France could enforce legal claims that were useless to Genoa, and the prosperity of the Corsicans was ultimately increased by their absorption into a great kingdom.

Paoli had done much for the welfare of his country, but men like Paoli are rare, and even he preserved his influence over his unruly countrymen because their fear of Genoa's rule made them willing to obey the man who had shown his ability to repel the Genoese. If this fear had been removed, if their independence had been acknowledged, there was less reason to expect orderly government in Corsica than in Poland, and the little island would soon have been plunged in the intestine brawls and feuds which had so long made up its history.[1]

The form which it had amused Choiseul to give this transaction deceived nobody; it was recognized by every other power that Corsica had become part of France, but while no one was pleased, no one felt sufficient interest in the fate of the brave islanders to undertake a war in their behalf. In England, sympathy with Paoli was strong, subscriptions were taken up to assist the islanders in their defense, and Burke declared that the idea of Corsica becoming a French province was terrible to him. Choiseul was annoyed by these expressions of sympathy with those whom he now regarded as rebellious Frenchmen. If the English take up subscriptions for Corsica, he wrote, we may

[1] Even in the year 1768, a plot was laid to murder Paoli by one of his followers, the son of his chancellor. Ragguagli dell' Isola di Corsica, November 7, 1768.

raise money for the colonists in America.[1] English sympathy went no further than unimportant contributions, and Paoli was left alone to protect the independence of his island against the power of France.

If other nations were not deceived by the form of the transaction between France and Genoa, certainly the Corsicans were not; this sudden change destroyed their hopes of independence, and excited a natural indignation. The Corsicans had long carried on negotiations with the French, who acted as mediators between Genoa and the insurgents, and Paoli hoped to see the independence of Corsica guaranteed under the protection of France.[2] Choiseul seems to have shown reasonably good faith, though always having in mind some advantage to be gained for his own country; he advised the Genoese that their cause was hopeless, and they had best grant to Corsica a practical independence; he warned Paoli that by asking too much he might drive Genoa to transfer her rights of suzerainty to some power which could enforce them. But when the combatants failed to agree and Corsica was offered to Choiseul as a French province, he had no hesitation in accepting the gift.

It was hopeless to resist the forces of France, yet Paoli and his followers would not abandon their hopes of seeing Corsica an independent state, and they made a gallant and fruitless resistance.[3] "We will not submit to be sold like sheep," was the popular cry; it was to no effect that the faint-hearted suggested the

[1] Letter, January 18, 1769.

[2] Paoli to Choiseul, June 20, 1766.

[3] Paoli recognized the hopelessness of resistance. "Quanto puo durare a combattere un popolo spionato d' ogni cosa contra una potenza tanto formidabile, e senza speranza d' alcun succorso? Pure la causa è giusta." Letter of October 3, 1768.

hopelessness of the struggle: the great majority preferred war to submission. "The Athenians were not more numerous than we when they defeated the enemy at Marathon and Platæa," cried an eager patriot, and his associates based their hopes on these classic examples.[1]

No sooner had the treaty with Genoa been signed than Choiseul sent out an army under the Marquis of Chauvelin to reduce the island to submission. The marquis was not a great soldier; he made little progress, and towards the close of the campaign the French suffered a defeat of some importance at Borgo. Such successes excited the hopes of the insurgents, but they were of no avail. Choiseul was resolved that a scantily populated island should not defy the power of France, and that his new acquisition should not make him the laughing-stock of Europe and of his countrymen. Reinforcements were sent, and in the spring of 1769, twenty thousand French soldiers were in Corsica.[2]

The insurgents had much in their favor. It was with great difficulty that cannon could be dragged over the mountains; in Corsica every man was a soldier and every house a fortress, every pass was admirable for defense and perilous to assailants. But even in these fastnesses a few hundred men could not resist an army led by competent officers. The French pushed on regardless of obstacles, dragged their field-pieces over ground that seemed impassable, and attacked the Corsicans wherever they made a stand. Three weeks were sufficient to end a hopeless resistance. At Ponte Nuovo, the Corsicans were defeated

[1] Arrighi, *Pascal Paoli*, 273.

[2] Letter of an officer, May 25, 1769.

with a loss of five hundred men; the figures do not seem large, but in forty years of intermittent war with Genoa, the insurgents had never lost so many men in a battle, and this defeat dispelled the hope of success even in the most sanguine. Soldiers began to desert, and the French were profuse in their offers to those willing to submit peaceably; there had always been a portion of the population friendly to a union with France, and pensions, favors, positions in the royal Corsican regiments, increased the number. On the 13th of June, 1769, Paoli took refuge on an English boat, at Porto Vecchio, and with a few of his followers set sail for England; he advised the Corsicans to submit to force which was irresistible, and not to make their condition worse by further resistance.

The conquest was complete; it was accomplished, said indignant patriots, not by arms, but by gold and fraud, but the majority of the population accepted their lot as Frenchmen with more or less of resignation. On the whole, their condition slowly improved. The population was ignorant and backward, and it was difficult to instill new ideas into such a people. There was little wealth; a family was regarded as rich in Corsica when, by hard work and cultivating their own land, they could escape need, and perhaps indulge in the luxury of one servant.[1]

While the French introduced some beneficial changes, the island did not escape the evils of French revenue systems and monopolies. The export duties were raised from two and one half per cent. to fifteen, the import duties were equally high; the export of oil and wheat and the few products of the island was checked by taxes which increased the prices and less-

[1] *Reflexions sur l'état actuel des Corses; Aff. Etr.*

ened the sales. The island had also to bear her share of the evils of bureaucracy and government interference; some trading company thought the coral fishers interfered with their monopoly, and the superintendent at once ordered this industry to be stopped.[1] But against such minor evils was the great gain that order was enforced to an extent that Corsica had never known, and that families, who could no longer devote their time to carrying on traditional feuds and shooting one another when occasion offered, were driven to occupations more useful to the commonwealth. Agriculture slowly improved, and Corsica in time became a fairly prosperous department of France. Its annexation has a special interest because it was the last addition to the possessions of France under the old régime; the last territorial acquisition of the monarchy of Hugh Capet made a French citizen of the man who was to succeed that ancient line on the French throne. France owed Napoleon Bonaparte to Choiseul and Louis XV.

[1] These grievances are stated in various memoirs preserved in the *Archives des Aff. Etr.*

CHAPTER XIX.

THE DISGRACE OF CHOISEUL.

NOTWITHSTANDING the misfortunes that flowed from the Austrian alliance, Louis was still constant to the policy he then adopted, and an opportunity was found to bind more closely the friendly ties between the two courts. The dauphin was nearly sixteen, and Choiseul endeavored to arrange a marriage between him and one of the daughters of Maria Theresa. These overtures met with a friendly reception; the empress had seven daughters, and the cares of ruling a great state did not interfere with a lively desire to see them well established in the world. It was not possible to find kings for them all, and their mother had to content herself with German and Italian princes as sons-in-law. Marie Antoinette was the youngest, and the prospect of marrying her to a prince who would be the greatest king in Europe was agreeable to the empress as a ruler and as a mother.

In 1770, the young archduchess, then fourteen years of age, started for the country in which she was to meet so tragic a destiny. Some of the incidents of the wedding festivities were referred to afterwards by those who took an interest in omens that presage evil. The princess entered the French kingdom at Strasburg, and Goethe has told us of the shock to his feelings when he found the great hall there hung with tapestries portraying the history of Jason and Medea, an example of a most ill-fated wedlock. His friends

assured him that no one else would be disturbed by the subjects of the pictures, or the poor taste in their selection, and doubtless they were right; æsthetic fitness in such things was little regarded, and Goethe's sensibilities were not shared by the courtiers who met their future queen in the hall at Strasburg.

But a frightful misfortune at Paris threw a gloom over the festivities. A great fête was given in honor of the nuptials at the Place de la Concorde, then the Place Louis XV.; there was a magnificent exhibition of fireworks, and it was estimated that four hundred thousand people gathered to witness them. All went well until the display was ended, but as the throng started to disperse, an accident partly blocked the streets leading from the square; some of the lights were extinguished, and the confusion increased in the darkness; the crowd behind hurried on, people were trodden under foot, the press grew worse, and the Rue Royale became the scene of a butchery as bad as many a battlefield. It was not until almost three in the morning that ladies wishing to go home in their carriages dared to make the venture. The number of those killed and injured at the festivities in honor of Marie Antoinette's marriage was estimated at many hundreds; it was a sinister beginning of a tragic career.[1]

The young dauphine did not find happiness in her new lot; she had been brought up at Vienna, and at the imperial court usages were simpler and etiquette

[1] Full accounts of this tragedy are given in *Enquête du Parlement*, June, 1770. See, also, *Mém. de Mme. de Genlis*, etc. In the official reports to the Parliament, the number killed is stated at one hundred and thirty-six, but this was believed to be below the truth.

less severe than at Versailles. She was young, somewhat heedless, and quite stubborn, and she often offended by a disregard of the rigorous formalities of the French court. Moreover her husband was wearisome to a vivacious and quick-witted girl. He was a diffident, poorly educated, sluggish minded, and very well-meaning boy; when he was not hunting, he was happiest if he could be tinkering at some job of locksmithing or masonry; her pride was chagrined when she saw the dauphin of France carrying building material with common laborers, and she expressed her feelings with the spirit in which she was never lacking.[1]

Not long after the marriage of the dauphin, the ministry of Choiseul came to an end. Many reasons were given for his overthrow. The troubles with the Parliament had already assumed a more serious aspect than at any other period of the reign, and the enemies of the minister whispered to one another that he encouraged the judges in their defiance of the royal authority. This was not true. He took no part in the violent measures which Maupeou advised; his secret sympathies were probably with the courts and against the chancellor, and his political affiliations inclined him to preserve friendly relations with a body that possessed the confidence of the Parisian public. But though he did not join in the campaign against the courts, he was by no means inclined to sacrifice his own power in order to save them from destruction.

By most of his contemporaries and by posterity, the downfall of a powerful minister has been attributed to the ill will of Mme. du Barry. Certainly she hated Choiseul, and used her influence to hasten his over-

[1] Mercy to Maria Theresa, July 17, 1773.

throw. She would have been the most forgiving of women, if she had bestowed any affection on the minister. He did not content himself with treating her with indifference, he was her pronounced enemy; from the salon of Mme. de Choiseul proceeded a constant stream of lampoons and gibes and abusive verses on the subject of the favorite. They were justified, and yet it is impossible to feel any great sympathy with Choiseul because he risked disgrace rather than flatter a low-born courtesan; his position would have been more imposing, if it had not been in such flagrant contrast with his conduct in the past. The duke owed his rise to the good will of Mme. de Pompadour, and he had been staunch in his adherence to her fortunes. The new mistress came from a lower social level, she was a vulgar and uninteresting woman, while Mme. de Pompadour possessed many charming accomplishments; but as to their relations with the king, it is hard to see why one who viewed the career of Mme. de Pompadour with complacency should feel bound to exhibit any righteous indignation over the favor of her successor. The former cost France more money, and involved the monarch in quite as much turpitude, and the minister who had been undisturbed by the ignominies of the *parc aux cerfs* cannot pose as a martyr to the cause of decency, though his overthrow was hastened by his refusal to conciliate a woman who placed one more blot on the reputation of the king, when it was already hopelessly smeared.

It was Choiseul's foreign policy that cost him the favor he had so long enjoyed. It would be nearer the truth to say that the family alliance, which the minister regarded as the great achievement of his career, at last caused his overthrow, than to charge his

ruin to the ill will of a woman who was content to be the king's mistress, and did not aspire to be his premier. The foreign policy of Choiseul after the peace of Paris deserves very qualified commendation. The truth is that the duke, though possessing very many showy and popular qualities, was rather a brilliant adventurer than a sagacious statesman, and if he had been left to himself, he would have involved France in new perils quite as grave as those of the Seven Years' war. Hardly had the treaty of peace been signed, when he began to calculate on the chances of a new war with England, which might retrieve the disgrace of the contest that was just ended. Plans for an invasion of England, arguments to show that landing soldiers in England without the formality of declaring war would be a just retribution for the seizure of French ships in times of peace, were complacently considered by the minister. It was natural that a Frenchman, when he considered the losses his country had sustained, should desire to wrench from England some portion of the maritime empire she had gained, but it was making a bad matter worse to go to war again only to be again beaten. Choiseul's relations with Spain seem to have taught him the political recklessness that had helped to reduce that country from the greatest empire in Europe to a power which counted for no more than the kingdom of Sardinia and much less than the kingdom of Prussia.

A complication in which France became involved as Spain's ally now led to Choiseul's overthrow. Though fallen in power, the Spanish still clung to their claims of an indefinite empire in the West, and by virtue of these the supremacy of Spain was asserted over a large part of the South Seas. The English declined

to recognize these pretensions, and in 1766, a small English settlement was established on one of the Falkland Islands, a group the importance of which was then much overestimated. It was not a valuable possession, but the Spanish saw fit to regard this island as a part of the world in which no one else should enter, even though they made no effort to occupy it themselves. They proceeded with a vigor that could only be justified if there was sufficient force with which to sustain it. No complaint was made to the English government. "We supposed," wrote Dr. Johnson, in his sounding periods, "that we should be permitted to remain the undisputed lords of tempest-beaten barrenness;"[1] but in June, 1770, an armament was sent out by the governor of Buenos Ayres; the Spanish landed on the island, compelled the little English garrison to surrender, and carried them away prisoners.

When the news reached London in the October following, the English at once demanded that the Spanish king should disavow the act of his governor and restore the island to its former occupants. These requests were not unreasonable; the violent expulsion of a garrison, without resort to any diplomatic formalities, was an act of extraordinary arrogance which would not usually be attempted unless the assailant wished to provoke immediate hostilities. Spain was in no condition to go to war with England, and notwithstanding the principles of stately and, we may say, stupid pride, which often governed the councils of Madrid, the hopelessness of such an encounter would have been recognized.

[1] This is cited by Lord Stanhope in his very just account of this affair.

But the family compact put Spain in a position where she could proceed with something of the arrogance of the past. By its terms, France was bound to come to her aid with men and ships, against any power with which she should become involved in war, and thus reinforced, Charles III. felt no necessity for making any sacrifice of Castilian pride. He declared, indeed, that he was willing to adopt conciliatory measures, but they must in no way infringe on his honor, and he announced plainly that he had no fear of war.[1]

There has been more difficulty in deciding whether Choiseul was equally willing to involve France in war over a question of etiquette, in which she had no interest. It is not strange that there should have been doubt as to his real desires, for they varied with the changes in his political situation. Maupeou, the chancellor, and Terray, the comptroller general, were deeply interested in the contest with the Parliaments; they were jealous of Choiseul's influence, and hoped to drive him from the king's councils. But in case war broke out between France and England, there was no probability that Choiseul would be removed from office. He had been secretary for the army and the navy, he was familiar with the condition and the needs of both branches of the service, and in the management of both he had shown extraordinary vigor; he possessed the confidence of the courts of Spain and of Austria. If hostilities began, Choiseul would be regarded as an indispensable man, while his rivals, whose intrigues had irritated the Parliaments and increased the difficulty of establishing the further taxation that would then be necessary, would promptly

[1] Ossun to Choiseul, August 20, September 27, 1770, *Aff. Etr., Espagne.*

be sent about their business. Thus Choiseul, who had always hoped for the glory of avenging upon England his country's defeats, had a personal motive for allowing the quarrel over the Falkland Islands to ripen into war. "I have no reason to doubt," wrote the Austrian ambassador, whose relations with the French minister were intimate, "that the Duke of Choiseul believed that war would strengthen his position and render his continuance in office necessary." [1]

In the summer of 1770, the letters of Choiseul to Spain were belligerent in their tone; he asked for information as to the condition of the Spanish navy, and when the Spanish hesitated on account of the lamentable condition of the French finances, Choiseul replied that money was never lacking in France when the necessity for it came.[2]

If the minister contemplated the possibility of war with calmness, such was not the case with his master. Louis was sincerely anxious for peace; he did not wish to be subjected to the mortifications of another disastrous conflict, and he was intelligent enough to know that France was not in condition to renew hostilities; moreover, though he hated the English, he now hated his own Parliaments much more; the conduct and the language of the judges grated on the feeling of absolute authority, which was as strong in Louis XV. as in his predecessor; he was much more interested in the success of Maupeou's attack upon the Parliaments than in beginning a war with England, in order to gratify the punctilios of Spanish pride. There were plenty of courtiers ready to whisper to the king that his chief minister was a political

[1] Mercy to Maria Theresa, September, 1770.

[2] Choiseul to Ossun, July 7, August 20, 1770.

firebrand, who was sure to involve Spain in hostilities, in which France as her ally would be obliged to join. Louis was not pleased at the prospect, and he intimated very sharply that he wished no war.

In consequence of such warnings, Choiseul's dispatches grew more pacific in their tone, but in the mean time the Spanish had become more belligerent, and they were now actively engaged in preparations for hostilities. No terms could be agreed to, said the king, which would tarnish the honor of the crown, and Grimaldi, the Spanish minister, declared that if he advised Charles to accede to those which the English demanded, he would be stoned by the Spanish people.[1] This zeal Choiseul now sought to moderate, and he endeavored to impress upon his allies that the dispute was a small one, and a resort to arms a serious measure. It is doubtful whether he hoped that his arguments would be efficacious, and it is certain he did not believe that they would be. War was regarded as inevitable, and in October Choiseul asked the council for eight million livres with which to prepare for the war that might soon begin.[2]

Charles refused to make the reparation asked, the English ambassador was ordered to leave Madrid, and if Choiseul had remained in office, there is little doubt that hostilities would have been commenced by Eng-

[1] Ossun to Choiseul, September 3, October 3; Choiseul to Ossun, September 25, December 23; *Ib.* to Grimaldi, December 10, etc., *Aff. Etr.* In Choiseul's letter to Grimaldi of December 19, 1770, while mildly advising peace, he says: "Si vous ne prenez pas ce parti, il faut prendre celui d'entrer en guerre vers la même époque, c'est-à-dire, à la fin de janvier, et dans ce cas, je croirais qu'il faudrait vous mander le jour que vous arrêteriez les vaissaux anglais dans vos portes."

[2] Dispatches of Mercy and Harcourt.

land, and that France would have come to the assistance of her ally, under the family compact by which she was bound. There can be as little doubt that in such an engagement the English would have been successful; the bankruptcy of the French treasury was aggravated by disputes with the Parliament and by universal discontent among the people, while Spain would have been no more dangerous in 1770 than she was in 1762. Neither of the allies was in condition to carry on a successful marine war against England. But Louis had at last decided to sacrifice Choiseul, and to notify his brother of Spain that he could hope for no aid from France. The minister's enemies had been vigorous in their attack; the family compact, they said, was indeed a delusion and a snare, if for some barren island that was of no importance even to Spain, France must become involved in a ruinous war, with a good prospect of being beaten. Eight millions had been promised with which to prepare for hostilities, but Terray did not concern himself about furnishing the money; there was no money to furnish, was his excuse, and in this there was much truth; Maupeou threatened to resign, if the effort to reduce the Parliaments to obedience was abandoned; Mme. du Barry had no love for the man who had publicly braved her, and whose friends had constantly insulted her. On December 24, 1770, a *lettre de cachet* ordered Choiseul to resign his position and retire to Chanteloup.[1]

[1] The *lettre de cachet*, in the form so often printed, informing the minister that he would have been exiled to a more remote spot had it not been for regard for his wife, and threatening him with further punishment unless his conduct was discreet, is apocryphal. The number of fictitious documents of this period which have found their way into history is prodigious. They were largely the creations of such writers as Soulavie,

Charles III. was at once notified of Choiseul's disgrace, and he knew this meant that Spain must rely upon herself and not upon her ally. "War," Louis wrote him, "in our present condition, would be a frightful evil for me and for my people."[1] The assurances of family tenderness which the letter contained were unimportant when the minister had been overthrown who framed the family compact, and was relied upon to carry it into effect. Messengers pursued the retiring English minister and brought him back to Madrid, and the conditions upon which the English had vainly insisted for three months were now agreed to. The barren island, over which a great war had almost started, was presently abandoned by England, and was not regarded as of sufficient importance to be occupied by Spain.

The dismissal of Choiseul was probably a judicious step, but the manner in which it was received by the public showed how rapidly the condition of France was changing. Until this time, a minister disgraced was a man ruined; if he endured banishment from Ver-

whose compilations have so long been regarded as worthy of credence. The order dismissing Choiseul, like that dismissing Bernis, was in the usual official form. In a curious letter, which reached Paris just after Choiseul's disgrace, the French envoy at London repeats a conversation with Lord North, who, he says, had been dining with Lord Sandwich, and was as drunk as a hackney coachman. Francès was convinced that the English minister was sincerely anxious for peace, and was greatly impressed by the lucidity of his mind even when hopelessly drunk. "In the most complete intoxication," he writes, "there were the same principles, the same ideas, which you will find stated in my last dispatch, for these gentlemen preserve their logic in their cups from force of habit." Francès to Choiseul, December 22, 1770.

[1] Louis to Charles, December 21.

sailles with even moderate calmness, he was thought to display great fortitude; his family shared the calamity and lamented his woes; a few friends might secretly express sympathy; but at court the man who had lost his master's favor was no longer considered, and there were few ministers in whose promotion or overthrow the community at large took the least interest. Such had been the fate of a fallen minister, not only under Louis XIV., but during most of his successor's reign; he retired to his country place, his family wept, his friends expressed mild regret, and the rest of the world thought no more about him.

Now the community had begun to take in politics the interest that had formerly been shared by few, and it suddenly became apparent that the favor of the public might atone for the disapproval of the sovereign. The scenes at Paris on the day that Choiseul left for his retreat were long remembered. The streets were crowded with spectators; even the roofs of the houses were lined with people watching the spectacle; at every turn the exiles were greeted by the acclamations of the public; there was hardly a shop window unadorned by a bust of Choiseul, placed side by side with that of Sully, and thus designating the two great patriotic statesmen who desired the welfare of the people.[1]

Choiseul was ordered to retire to Chanteloup, twenty miles from Paris. Ministers of greater capacity and of more popular qualities had been exiled before, and had been left to peaceful solitude. Now the public and, even more, the court took up the cause of the fallen statesman; he had been disgraced by the king, and this seemed to constitute a title to glory among

[1] Maugras, *La duchesse de Choiseul.*

his associates. Rarely before in French history had the expression of disapproval by the sovereign helped to make a man more popular.

To Chanteloup the most of those who were prominent in rank or position turned their steps. Courtiers asked the king's permission before making the visit; it was not an agreeable request for him to hear, and it became more offensive from its frequency. At last Louis said to all who asked, "I neither permit you nor forbid you." Every one knew that he was little pleased at these marks of honor to the man he had dismissed, but every one accepted this very qualified consent as sufficient, and disregarded the royal displeasure. A constant stream of illustrious visitors flowed from Paris to Chanteloup; distinguished foreigners went there, anxious to see the place which excited public attention quite as much as Versailles; the Duke of Chartres, who was known later as Philippe Egalité, began his political career by hastening to pay his respects to the eminent exile. "What have we to regret?" wrote the Duchess of Choiseul; "the laments of France are my husband's triumph. . . . While Europe rings with his name, he here passes tranquil days. . . . This public interest insures my husband's glory, and repays him for twelve years of toil and anxiety."[1]

At Chanteloup, Choiseul lived in the splendor of which he was fond. The château and its dependencies were expensive and magnificent; the guests who drove up at night to a vast row of buildings, all brilliantly lighted and filled with people, could hardly believe they were not arriving at Versailles. Tables

[1] Duchess of Choiseul to Lady Cholmondeley, February 6, 1771; *Ib.* to Mme. du Deffand, February 14.

were often set for seventy guests; the dinner was early, and supper, at nine o'clock, was the great meal. The duke desired that all his guests should then appear in full court dress; neither in the distinction of those present, nor in the richness of the costumes, did the salons of Chanteloup yield to those of Versailles. After supper, many sought recreation in music, or games, or gambling, but the greatest pleasure was reserved for the favored few who remained after most of the guests had retired. The duke was the most charming of talkers, and he would often discuss questions of the day or incidents of his varied career until three or four in the morning. "Never in my life," said a frequent visitor, "have I listened to conversation that was more interesting." [1]

To celebrate these manifestations of friendship and admiration, a building was erected on the grounds, a sort of *arc de triomphe* of Chanteloup, on which were inscribed the names of all those who came there to present their respects during the four years Choiseul spent in exile. The list was long and curious; the names of most of the visitors are now forgotten, even the glory of the minister has grown dim with years, but this popular triumph of a man whom the king refused to honor was one of the significant incidents of a new era in France.

Choiseul was succeeded in office as secretary of foreign affairs by the Duke of Aiguillon. The new minister was a man of very ordinary parts, but he was a discreet courtier and a favorite of Mme. du Barry, and to her influence he owed his position.

No changes of importance were made in the ministry during the three remaining years of Louis XV.'s

[1] *Mém. de Cheverny*, i. 391, 4, etc.

reign, nor was this period marked by notable political events, except the bitter struggle between Maupeou and the Parliaments. The government, like the king who was its representative, was becoming decrepit; the end had been reached of a long and an inglorious reign. "It will last during my day," was the remark often attributed, and perhaps justly attributed, to Louis XV. It was a thing he might well have said, for he was indifferent to a future that would not affect himself, and he was sufficiently clear sighted to see the signs of dissolution in the system and the society of which he was the head.

The heir to the throne was now Louis's grandson, the future Louis XVI. If Louis's son had survived him, it is probable that he would have been a reputable, though not a sagacious monarch. Louis XV. had but one son, and he married first a Spanish cousin and then a Saxon princess; by the latter he had three sons who grew to be men, all of whom were afterwards kings of France. In character, the dauphin bore more resemblance to his pious mother than to his licentious father; his life was one of the severest decorum; it is possible that the open scandal of the father's career may have rendered the son more strict in the rigorous propriety of his conduct. Though correct in his morals, the dauphin showed no indication of the qualities that make an able ruler; he was the close ally of the Jesuits and wholly under their influence; had he inherited the throne, he would probably have been strenuous for the adoption of the Unigenitus, he would have been zealous for the suppression of heresy, and have sought to silence the teachings of philosophers and freethinkers. The overthrow of the Society of Jesus was a grievous blow to

one who took his favorite advisers from that order, but the heir to the throne rarely exercised any influence on the politics of the country, and the dauphin's efforts in behalf of his friends were without avail.

In 1765, at the age of thirty-six, he died, and his son, the Duke of Berry, became the heir apparent. Like his father, he was well behaved and by no means brilliant; he was fond of tinkering, and still more fond of hunting. He possessed the diffidence so common in the Bourbon family; he was reticent, and of his future character and tendencies it was difficult to form an opinion. His grandfather was not an old man, but his health was broken from the course of debauchery, which he continued notwithstanding advancing years, and it was evident that erelong a new ruler would be upon the throne. Yet the character of the future king was so entirely null that no party formed around him, and the intrigues of the court proceeded as if Louis XV. was to be immortal. No other court in the world wrote the English minister, was as full of intrigues and factions as that of Versailles; they so absorbed the attention of all that no one had any time to think of questions of more importance.[1]

Little attention was given to foreign relations: the king desired only to be amused by the courtesan who had attracted his fancy; Maupeou was absorbed in establishing his new courts; Aiguillon had neither the courage nor the ability to take any decided part in European politics; he had no fixed policy, wrote the Austrian ambassador, and he had neither energy nor resolution.[2]

[1] Letter of February 15, 1771, Raumer, iv. 369.

[2] Mercy to Maria Theresa, April 15, 1772.

The danger of a partition of Poland had long been apparent, and when it was carried into effect the consent of France was neither given nor asked. Frederick and Catherine knew that the infirm government of that country was in no condition to hinder their plans; Maria Theresa and the Austrian ministers did not hesitate to keep their ally of France in ignorance of their designs until they had been put in execution. If Choiseul had been minister, said many, the partition of Poland would not have been attempted, but in this they were quite wrong. Frederick II. was not a man to give heed to remonstrances, unless he knew there were the power and the will to make them effective; France was in no condition to protect Poland, and only the certainty of war and the uncertainty of success would have kept the despoilers of that country from carrying out their plans.

If the influence of France in European politics was small, this was partly due to her financial condition. Though the country was at peace and by no means unprosperous, it became constantly more difficult to rescue the finances from the slough of despond in which they were involved. In 1769, the Abbé Terray was made comptroller general. He was a sagacious and an unscrupulous man; he soon realized that it was not reform that was wanted but money, and this he proceeded to get by the means that suggested themselves to a person of much boldness and little conscience.

The difficulties of the position did not appall him; he was an ambitious intriguer, eager for place and money, clever in devices, and bold to recklessness; he had been selected for the place — such at least was the gossip of the day — because he was believed to possses

the greatest amount of ability and the fewest scruples of any man in the kingdom. By his contemporaries, he was regarded with aversion mingled with fear; his sombre face, his haggard eye, his downcast look, the abrupt and discourteous speech, the bitter laugh, all denoted a man devoid of mercy and scruples and remorse.[1]

So profuse was the expenditure and so loose the financial system that, even in times of peace, the public debt steadily increased. Nor was this caused by any great outlay for public works; no canals were dug; if new roads were built, this was usually done by forced labor. France was sufficiently rich to pay the cost of a government that was administered with any degree of economy; under better systems of taxation, she might have supported even the waste and profligacy of the administration of Louis XV., and yet the embarrassment of the treasury became constantly more severe. In the three years of peace that followed the treaty of Paris, the debt increased one hundred and fifteen million livres; for 1769, the deficiency was estimated at one hundred millions. At first, Terray hoped to ameliorate this condition by a policy of wise economy. "If your majesty would order a reduction of a few millions," he said, "what happiness for the state." If only a few years could pass without new loans, the comptroller saw the certainty of better credit and increased prosperity.[2]

[1] Monthyon, *Particularités sur les ministres des finances.* Terray had the faculty of exciting confidence. "Questo controller generale, credesi certamente, sara l' uomo atto a risorgere le finanze di questa monarchia," the Venetian ambassador wrote. *Dis. Ven.*, 252.

[2] *Etat au vrai,* 1769; Bailli, *Histoire financière,* ii. 169.

Such reforms were promised, but no one thought seriously of putting them into execution. Louis himself saw the hopelessness of any radical change with the clear eye of intelligent indifference. "The stealings are enormous," he said to Choiseul, "but it is impossible to stop them; too many people, and above all, too many people of influence, are interested in them. Fleury tried, and he failed; let an evil subsist that is incurable." [1] No one could have put French finances on a solid basis, except by changes in methods of taxation, and by alterations in the modes of life at court which would have been the end of the old régime, and the minister who attempted such a revolution was sure to lose his place from the hostility of the innumerable interests he would offend. Turgot made the effort, and not even the king's favor could protect him from his enemies.

Terray was not the man to sacrifice himself in attempts at financial reform that were sure to be unsuccessful, and would only result in the loss of his own favor. He was full of devices, but they were the devices of a financial charlatan, whose aim was to obtain money for the day without thought for the morrow. He began his career with vigor, and with entire disregard for the rights of creditors or the plighted faith of the government. The interest on the public debt was reduced in greater or less degree; reimbursements that were now due were delayed or repudiated; new taxes were imposed; by means more or less violent he obtained one hundred million livres for the treasury. These edicts brought ruin to many; in one day the price of some obligations of the state fell thirty per cent.; the present gain was at the cost of having

[1] *Mém. de Bezenval*, 158.

to pay still more usurious rates when the government was again a borrower. The great banker, La Balue, was obliged to suspend payments, and was only saved from bankruptcy because the government relaxed its severity and came to his aid; those who remembered the terrible days that followed the wreck of the Mississippi Company said the condition of Paris was now hardly better.[1]

The comptroller general knew that to keep his place, not only must he bring money into the treasury, but it must be allowed to flow out freely, and the expenditures of the closing years were the most lavish of the reign.[2] Terray, no more than Louis, disturbed himself by thinking what would happen when Berry became king. In 1774, the deficit had again grown to forty million livres, and the advances made by the bankers and farmers-general cost the government seventeen per cent.[3] Such was the financial legacy of Louis XV. to his successor.

[1] Harcourt to Weymouth, February, 1770; *Mém. de l'Abbé Terray; Mém. de Hardy.*

[2] Numerous illustrations of this are given in the letters of Mercy to Maria Theresa, i. 174, 277, *et pas.*

[3] Bailli, *Hist. fin.* ii. 190; *Comptes de Turgot*, 1775; *Etat au vrai*, 1774.

CHAPTER XX.

THE OVERTHROW OF THE PARLIAMENT.

To the edicts of Terray the Parliament made the resistance that it rarely failed to oppose to financial measures of the government, but it contented itself with protests. No body in the state was more solicitous for its own advantages, and in view of this, Terray in his measures of partial repudiation had spared the rentes of the Hôtel de Ville, which were the favorite investment of parliamentary families. The enforcement of these edicts was not therefore followed by any attempt on the part of the judges to suspend their ordinary duties. Still their remonstrances were distasteful, and they were followed by protests from another branch of the courts, equally justified, and even more disagreeable.

The farming of taxes was the worst feature of the French financial system, and the farmers-general inflicted greater evils upon the tax-payer than the extravagance of mistresses or the immoderate pensions of the nobility. As is often the case, those who sought to pillage the treasury were the best friends of the officials who were supposed to be its guardians; the company of farmers-general had with the French administration an influence equal to that exerted on modern legislative bodies by great corporations and gigantic business interests, and they exercised it with the same greed for their own unjust advantage.

In 1767, a merchant named Monnerat was sus-

pected of smuggling by some official in the employ of the farmers-general; the officer asked for a *lettre de cachet*, which was promptly granted, and by virtue of this Monnerat was confined in the prison of Bicêtre with barbarous rigor. For three months he was kept in a dark cell, fastened by a chain weighing fifty pounds attached to his neck; he was then transferred to another cell, where his condition was little better; there he remained for seventeen months, and might have stayed for a lifetime, if some friends had not interfered in his behalf. During all this time he had no trial, nor were formal charges made against him, and when he was liberated he showed without trouble that the over-zealous official had mistaken him for some one else. The *lettre de cachet* had been intended for a man called La Feuillade, and it had been Monnerat's ill fortune to be mistaken for him, and to be confined for almost two years before he had an opportunity to expose the error. He now claimed redress from the society of farmers-general, and his demands were certainly moderate; all that he asked was money enough to cure him of the scurvy contracted in the filthy dungeons in which he had been confined. They refused to pay anything, and he brought suit for damages before the Court of Aides.

There could hardly have been a case which the government might more properly have left to the courts for their decision; the injustice had been gross, and the defendants were quite able to protect themselves from any excessive demands. But the influence of the farmers-general was boundless; they were rich, corrupt, and unscrupulous, and at their request, the proceeding in February, 1770, was ordered to be transferred to the royal council, which amounted to

denying any chance of redress. The Court of Aides refused to recognize the legality of this invasion of their jurisdiction, and their protests were drawn by one of the most illustrious members of the French judiciary. "If the government wished to make a display of its authority," wrote Malesherbes, "the occasion was ill chosen when there was an odious and crying abuse which the Court of Aides had sought to redress." In its further protests the court complained justly of the abuses for which *lettres de cachet* furnished the opportunity, when granted by facile ministers to greedy contractors. The dungeons of Bicêtre, it was said, were intended for criminals condemned to death, whose lives were spared because they betrayed their confederates; and in those vile and noisome cells it was apparently intended to make life so odious that the prisoner would regret the death he had escaped. Yet in them an innocent man had been confined, because a subordinate of the farmers of taxes had wrongfully suspected him of selling contraband tobacco. "There is, Sire," said the remonstrance, "no citizen in your kingdom who may not see his liberty sacrificed to another's vengeance, for surely no one is so great as to be above the hatred of a minister, and no one is so lowly as to be below the ill will of a clerk of the farmers-general." [1]

These protests were unheeded, and a proceeding, in which persons of more importance than the unlucky Monnerat were involved, brought on the final breach between the courts and the king. The Parliament of Brittany often showed as much independence as that

[1] The details of this transaction are given in Flammermont, *Maupeou et les Parlements*, 50–59, and in *Receuil de ce que s'est passé à la Cour des Aides.*

of Paris, and, in 1764, the judges of that court forbade the collection in their province of a tax for which their consent had not been legally obtained. The recalcitrant magistrates were ordered to Versailles, but the sight of royalty did not overcome their resistance. As a result of this opposition, some members of the court were thrown in prison by the Duke of Aiguillon, then governor of the province, others were exiled, and a new Parliament was organized. Four years later, the government wearied of the resistance made by the stubborn Bretons to the new tribunal, and the old judges were restored to their places. This measure was received with unbounded joy; at Rennes the streets were filled with dancers, the houses were illuminated, Te Deums were sung in the churches, and cannon were roaring not only all day but all night, to celebrate the return of the exiles.

The magistrates of Brittany were not content with this victory. Aiguillon, if their complaints are to be credited, had not only behaved tyrannically but corruptly, and in his zeal against the recalcitrant judges, he had endeavored to suborn witnesses who would assist in their ruin. These charges were probably justified. Aiguillon was an ambitious intriguer, with a taste for trickiness; he was ready for an act of high-handed violence, and was quite capable of seeking to uphold it by underground intrigues that would not bear the light, and his conduct in Brittany had combined oppression, weakness, and deceit.

Whatever his character, he was a very important personage; he was a peer of the realm, and as such could only be brought to trial before the Parliament of Paris; he possessed the good will of the king and, what was still more important, he was regarded with

favor by Mme. du Barry. With some imprudence, the duke professed a wish to be placed on trial, that the charges against him might be refuted, and in 1770, formal proceedings were instituted before the Parliament of Paris.

Permission to proceed in this affair was agreeable to the judges; they were enabled to investigate the doings of the governor of a province and one of the greatest noblemen in France; they could punish the indignities suffered by their brethren in Brittany, and any interference with their procedure was sure to be almost as distasteful as if the government had sought to check the court when engaged in the overthrow of the Jesuits.

But as the prosecution continued, both the king and the duke grew more anxious to stop it; the Parliament was preparing to investigate the acts of one who had been the representative of royalty in Brittany; a body of lawyers, always insubordinate and often insolent, would examine with no friendly eyes those inner and secret workings of the state which could not without scandal be revealed to the public. If Louis was annoyed because a lot of judges were resolved to ferret out secrets of state, Aiguillon was still more disturbed by what they might discover. It was evident that the Parliament was unfriendly; he would probably be subjected to a humiliating sentence and possibly to severe punishment; even Mme. du Barry might hesitate to make a man chief minister who had been judicially condemned for subornation or perjury. In June, the Parliament was informed that a prosecution which involved acts of the government and the execution of royal orders could not be allowed to proceed, and the judges were forbidden to take further steps in the matter.

This order was sure to excite a judicial tempest. The Parliament of Paris not only protested against a denial of justice, but declared Aiguillon deposed from his rank in the peerage until he should clear himself of the charges. The provincial courts joined in expressions of indignation at a tyrannical interference with the course of justice, and at the indignity done to their brethren of Paris.

The quarrel might have ended like many a similar one, if the king had not been advised by a resolute man, who was unappalled by any amount of forensic vituperation. In 1768, Maupeou, then president of the Parliament of Paris, had been promoted to the office of chancellor. This was the greatest judicial dignity in the kingdom; the chancellor had a salary of over one hundred thousand livres, he held his office for life, he spoke for the king in beds of justice and in his dealings with the judiciary; though the functions were very different, the position was as important as that of lord high chancellor of England. Maupeou was a man of ability and resolution; his industry was indefatigable, and by four in the morning he was often at work; he sought no relaxation, he took no interest in the literature which so largely absorbed the attention of the community; ambitious for power, fond of making money, and not fond of spending it, he was a man who could not be diverted from his purpose, and who brought to its accomplishment an unwearied persistence; he made himself for many years the most unpopular man in France.[1]

[1] The private character of the future chancellor, then a president of the Parliament, is portrayed in unflattering colors in the correspondence between his wife and her cousin, Mme. d'Epinay. "He thinks that I am not worthy to be his wife," writes Mme.

He belonged to an ancient parliamentary family; more than a century before, the Maupeous had counted fifty kinspeople by blood and marriage in the Parliament of Paris alone; he himself had entered that body when only nineteen, and had been a member of it for thirty-five years. But Maupeou's ambitions were not controlled by any fanatical devotion to the courts; he was now one of the king's advisers, and was resolved to uphold the king's authority; if the courts as constituted were a hindrance in every measure the government sought to adopt, he was quite ready to create new courts that would be less inclined to discuss politics, and quite as well fitted to decide questions of law.

In December, 1770, an edict was issued in which all the misdeeds of the Parliaments were recited; they had, so it declared, forgotten their true character as separate courts formed to render justice in their various jurisdictions; they now sought to band themselves together and to form a new organization in the body politic; they declared themselves the representatives of the nation and the interpreters of the king's will; in a mistaken zeal for public affairs which did not concern them, they had repeatedly resorted to the scandalous measure of refusing to perform the duties for which they were created; they had left litigants without redress, and crime without punishment. The Parliaments were therefore bidden to avoid in the future any attempts at joint action; they were not to oppose the enforcement of the royal edicts, nor were

de Maupeou in one of her letters. "Ah, why did he not always think so?" *Jeunesse de Mme. d'Epinay*, i. 162. Even Maupeou's friends never claimed that amiability or liberality were among his virtues.

they by resignation or otherwise to stop the regular and ordinary administration of justice. The conduct of the judges may have been governed by a just regard for the public good, but this edict described it truthfully. In its provisions there was little that was new; similar commands had often been issued, though not always observed.

But the judges at this time were in no humor to obey such orders; they were supported by the sympathy of almost the entire community, as well as by a strong conviction of their own importance in the state, and they would not yield to the dictation of a minister whom they regarded as a traitor to their cause. They declared in their remonstrances that in this edict they were treated as criminals towards the king; that by its provisions the form of government was changed, and the sacred rights of subjects received irreparable harm; so long as it remained in force they would not proceed with the administration of justice, and accordingly they directed the courts to be closed.

Such an act was sure to produce serious confusion; criminals could not be tried, the wrongs of suitors could not be righted, solicitors and advocates found themselves without work and, what was worse, without pay; the condition of the numerous force of clerks, bailiffs, and minor officials was no better; the earnings of thousands of men were stopped; the rights and interests of still larger numbers were affected; from the first president who lived in splendor in his hotel, to the humblest tipstaff who hung about the Salle des Pas Perdus, all were plunged in confusion and were in very bad humor. Because such a step was so inconvenient to the community and so vexatious to the

government, it had frequently been resorted to, and generally with some degree of success. Closing the courts often brought temporary exile and other annoyances to the judges, but in the end a compromise was made; the Parliament obtained some concession to its dignity, its animosities, or its interests, and the administration of justice was again resumed.

The present judicial émeute did not result in compromise. The king repeatedly ordered the Parliament to resume its duties, and the members as often refused to obey. On the night of January 19, 1771, each judge was visited by two mousquetaires, who demanded that he should at once signify in writing whether he would obey, or whether he would continue to disobey, the king's order. The judges were roused from their beds to answer this peremptory demand, and they were allowed to consult with no one, not even with their wives. Even under such embarrassing circumstances, the great majority remained true to their colors, and would not agree to resume their judicial duties; the minority who, in the confusion and alarm of this nocturnal summons, dared not signify a formal disobedience to the king's commands, were more courageous by daylight; they reconsidered their decision and joined the cause of their brethren.

Maupeou was resolved to take no half-way measures; if the members of the Parliament would not discharge the duties of judges, they should cease to be judges; new courts should be created, and an opportunity would thus be afforded for reforms in the administration of justice, of which there was sore need. The disobedient magistrates were exiled to various parts of France, those most obstinate, it was said, being sent to the most dull and disagreeable places. Exile was

a punishment to which the magistrates were somewhat accustomed, and by which they were not greatly disturbed, but in addition to this, an edict declared their offices to be vacated by their misconduct. As these positions were all obtained by purchase and constituted a form of property, a subsequent edict allowed the holders to demand compensation, but the terms were unfavorable, and for what the judges did not wish to sell; they received a low price, payable in the obligations of a government in very bad credit.

This measure was received with amazement and consternation; judges had been exiled and had been imprisoned, but never before had the king assumed to divest them of their judicial dignities; the Parliament of Paris, which traced its origin back for more than four centuries, which had been powerful in the days of St. Louis and Philip the Fair, ceased to exist; men who had purchased judicial positions, and who regarded their property as secure as if it consisted of houses in Paris or acres in Touraine, found it suddenly swept away. The community was as amazed as were the magistrates, and almost as indignant.

The chancellor proceeded, undisturbed by the clamor of the public or the laments of the judges. It was necessary to provide for the administration of justice, and new courts were at once organized; but it was more difficult to secure judges than to create tribunals. The members of the old Parliament could not be bribed to accept situations in the new Parliament, and only with much trouble were new men obtained to take the places of the deposed magistrates. If it was hard to find judges, it was still more difficult to find litigants for the new tribunals. Lawyers would

not plead in them, officials would not serve writs, suitors would not allow their cases to be argued; the docket of cases on hand was called and no one answered; the court had to adjourn because it could find nothing to do. The magistrates had even to be protected by soldiers from the insults of the public; every one, wrote an indignant witness, when the new judges took their seats, regarded this as the abomination of desolation in the sanctuary of justice. Some complaints in their bitterness savored of revolutionary violence. "Maupeou," said a pamphleteer, "is the most abominable monster hell has vomited up for the misery of the kingdom. . . . What good citizen would not like to forge the weapon or fire the gun which should avenge the country and deliver it from the villain who has destroyed it." [1]

Notwithstanding the public excitement, there was no violence; no barricades rose in the streets of Paris as when President Broussel was arrested, and there was no repetition of the disturbances of the Fronde. Though the reverence for royalty and the respect for established institutions had rapidly grown weaker, the community contented itself with abusing Maupeou; the public discontent could find sufficient expression in libels and cartoons and epigrams. At the era of the Fronde, great nobles, still possessing some remains of feudal power, had used the agitation excited by the courts as an excuse to foment disturbance. Then there was a minority, the regent was a Spanish woman, the chief minister was an Italian cardinal; since that time any independent power of the nobility had ceased to exist; authority was in the hands of the king; to resist him was revolution, and the nation was not ready for revolution.

[1] *Journal of Hardy.*

Maupeou proceeded with his plans for a general reorganization of the courts, and there was hardly a change which was not a reform. The territory included within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris had been enormous, and embraced almost one half of the kingdom; it extended from Calais to Lyons and Angoulême. Not only might a litigant with propriety resort to personal solicitation of his judges, but this was expected; the unlucky suitor came from Rheims or La Rochelle or Boulogne to watch his suit; he was long detained in Paris, and often found it cheaper to submit to injustice by default, than to incur the expense required to establish a righteous claim. This evil was now remedied; six courts, known as superior councils, were organized in different parts of the territory which had been included in the former jurisdiction of the Parliament of Paris. That court was retained, at least in name, but its jurisdiction was diminished, and the control which it had sought to exercise in questions of state was largely modified. The chancellor endeavored to obtain the approval of the intelligent sentiment of the community by still more important reforms. Judicial offices had been multiplied as a means of raising money, and the number of judges was too large; the wisdom of the few was often overborne by the numerous votes of less learned associates, and the Parliament partook of the character of a legislative body. The Parliament of Paris had about two hundred members; in the new Parliament there were but seventy-five, and that number was amply sufficient for the performance of all judicial duties.

A more serious evil in the old system was the sale of judicial offices; introduced as a result of financial

distress, this had become the corner-stone of the French judiciary. A father bequeathed his position to his son, who might be a young man of twenty, taking more interest in champagne suppers and *cocottes* than in listening to prosy lawyers or investigating the Pandects and the Institutes; or some prosperous clerk of the farmers-general, as ignorant of law as of medicine, purchased a position which was not only a safe investment for his money, but secured for him increased dignity and valuable privileges. The court had a certain control over those who were admitted as its members; the *esprit de corps* was strong in the old parliamentary families, and the evils resulting from this system were not as serious in practice as might have been supposed; still it was a grave evil that not only could a man become a judge by buying or inheriting his office, but he could not become a judge in any other way. Amid the changes in society and politics that were progressing, it was impossible that judicial offices should much longer remain articles to be sold to the highest bidder, or that a judge should be allowed to dispose of his position as he would of his horses.

Maupeou did away with the whole system: in the new courts, the judges were to be appointed by the government; they were to receive salaries instead of making their profits from fees paid by suitors; litigation was to be relieved of such expenses, and the opportunities for corruption, for which this furnished the chance, would no longer exist.

The chancellor proposed not only to remodel the judiciary, but to work important reforms in the legal system of France. There was great need for such work; in no European country was there more hope-

less confusion of different customs and procedures, or a greater supply of anomalies and inconsistencies. The contrast between the English and the French legal systems at this period was as great as between a well-lighted, well-policed, and well-cleaned city of Europe to-day, and the same place six centuries ago, — a hopeless mass of intricate ways, dark, dirty, unwholesome, and unsafe. The administration of the criminal law was cruel and unjust, the administration of civil rights varied in the different provinces. A man's rights and his liabilities were not the same in Britanny and Berri, in Normandy and Provence, and what they really were in any part of France, it was difficult to ascertain.

It was due to the intricacy of the law that the amount of litigation was far larger in proportion to the volume of business than it is to-day.[1] Feudal privileges, recognized in one province, were denied in another; trade guilds possessed monopolies in Paris that were questioned in Marseilles; a tax that was legal in Normandy could not be enforced in Burgundy; and the lack of a simple and uniform system of law and procedure bred an enormous amount of costly litigation, which often ruined both the defeated and the successful party.

The contemplated reforms were not carried into effect, but it should be said in Maupeou's justification that his efforts were hampered by the opposition made to any change in the existing order of things. Probably, also, he lacked the ability for a broad and judicious reorganization of French jurisprudence, but when, after the Revolution, the modern courts were established, when the confused mass of French law

[1] *France under the Regency*, 318.

was codified and became an orderly and scientific scheme of jurisprudence, the result bore more resemblance to the system which Maupeou sought to create, than to that which he vainly endeavored to destroy.

For the French monarchy and the old régime, the overthrow of the courts was doubtless a dangerous experiment. On the vast antiquity of French institutions, and on the conservatism of the French character, depended in part, at least, the apparent solidity of the French political and social fabric. Of this ancient edifice the Parliaments formed a part, and their origin was lost in the dim past of the monarchy. Such organizations had seemed beyond the possibility of destruction, but in the reign of Louis XV. it became apparent that these ancient institutions were no necessary part of the system of things. First the Jesuits, who for a century and a half had been a great force in the French ecclesiastical system, were expelled; then the ancient courts, in their turn, were swept away; the feeling of unrest, the consciousness of instability, found stimulus in such changes; the ancient organization was beginning to give way, and its entire ruin came with marvelous rapidity.

When the Parliaments were overthrown, there arose a demand, long unheard in France, that the States General, the representatives of the people, should again be convened. For over one hundred and fifty years that body had not met; rarely had any desire been expressed for its meeting, and never had such a desire been generally felt. If the States were not forgotten, they were no longer present in men's minds as a living part of the political organization. But when the protests of the courts were silenced in 1771, the cry arose that the true representatives of

the people should convene and give voice to their needs, and when the wish was once felt, it grew constantly stronger until it had its accomplishment.[1]

The provincial Parliaments throughout France espoused the cause of the court of Paris, and met with substantially the same fate. They were reorganized: the old members who proved unruly lost their offices; those who were ready to submit to the inevitable found places in the new courts.

Only a passive resistance was made to these changes, and rarely was there any necessity for a resort to force. When the Court of Aides was dissolved, its members refused to leave their chamber unless an express order of the king to that effect was produced. Their obstinacy wearied the Duke of Richelieu, who had been charged with the execution of the edict. "My troops are my orders," he said, pointing to the soldiers who accompanied him. "Leave." The magistrates obeyed without further parley.

But if there was no forcible resistance, if there were no barricades and no rioting, the protests, in the boldness of their language, were presages of the Revolution. The constitution of the state had been violated, declared members of the Parliament of Brittany, in terms which showed how large was the influence which Rousseau's political writings already exerted, and only the nation could change the conditions of the contract which the fundamental law of the state imposed between princes and their subjects. To despoil judges of their offices, said the Court of Aides, was to deprive subjects of rights which belonged to

[1] The first suggestion of convening the States General came from the Parliament of Normandy, in 1760, but it was very vaguely expressed.

Frenchmen by the laws of the land, and to all men by the laws of humanity and reason. Formerly, they continued, the people had the right to present their complaints by their States General, but when for a century and a half these had not met, the courts sought to give expression to the wants of the people. "This resort," said their protest, "is taken away. Interrogate then the nation, since its voice alone will be listened to by your majesty." "The depositaries of the laws," said another remonstrance, "in a well-regulated state, arrest the temporary caprice of the sovereign, while in a despotic state, sedition overthrows the despot who has leveled all beneath his feet, and, having nothing to support him, he falls at the first shock." "Consider," said still another, "the evils which weigh upon us, and the still greater evils with which the state is menaced; the Roman empire when near its fall did not display so many symptoms of destruction; morals are attacked as well as the laws, the finances are in confusion, the most solemn engagements are broken, private fortunes ruined, and imposts multiplied without end. . . . And yet it is not seen that to substitute force for the authority of the laws, and the despot for the monarch, is to break the bonds of submission, to imperil the interest of the nation, and to shake the stability of the throne." [1]

It was not only discontented advocates and excited publicists who used such language; the princes of the blood, headed by the Duke of Orleans and the Prince of Condé, entered their solemn protest against the destruction of the Parliaments, as an infringement on the rights of the French people, and an act dan-

[1] Remonstrances of the Parliaments of Dijon, Brittany, Normandy, Court of Aides, etc.

gerous to the true interests of the throne of which they were the support.[1] It was long since any remonstrance against a measure adopted by the king had been made by the princes who stood nearest the throne, and their action excited unbounded enthusiasm among the partisans of the courts.[2]

It failed to produce any effect upon the king. Louis seized the protest and threw it into the fire, and the princes were forbidden to appear in his presence. Notwithstanding all opposition, it seemed probable that the changes instituted by Maupeou would be established, and that the Parliaments of France, though still subsisting in name, would bear little resemblance to the courts of the past. The king was resolved to take no backward step. When the new Parliament was created, Louis departed from his custom, and declared his purpose by word of mouth, and with unusual vehemence. "You hear my will," he declared to the great assemblage of judges and officials; "I forbid any deliberation contrary to my edicts, and any measures in reference to the former members of my Parliament. I will never change."[3] He kept his word. Notwithstanding constant intrigues to restore the old judges and to destroy the system which the chancellor had established, Louis would never consent to the one or the other. He lived for three years after the famous edict, and at his death Maupeou was still in power, and the new courts were still in operation.

Not only were they in operation, but their early difficulties had ceased. Lawyers had been found who

[1] Protestation, April 4, 1771.

[2] See *Journals* of Hardy and Regnault at this date.

[3] *Journal Historique; Journal de Hardy*, i. 250, etc.

would plead before them; litigants had not long left their rights in abeyance on account of any sentimental sympathy with deposed magistrates; before the death of Louis XV., justice was administered under the new judicial system with no more hindrance than prior to 1771. The new judges were still unpopular; in social standing certainly, and in legal learning probably, they were on the average inferior to the men they replaced. Those who accepted places in these courts were subjected to contumely that discouraged men of established position. He who appeared as a judge in Maupeou's court was looked upon by the community much as the laborer is regarded by his brother trades-unionists when he goes to work for the master during a strike. If the abusive slang of to-day had been in vogue, those who accepted these offices would have been called scab judges, and doubtless, among those whom Maupeou was obliged to appoint to fill the judicial benches, many were lawyers and adventurers of uncertain integrity and unsavory record. "Take them," said President Brosses, throwing his judicial robes to his valet when the Parliament of Provence was reorganized; "only lackeys will wear them in the future."[1] But this evil was in its nature temporary; sooner or later competent men would have been glad to secure places in courts the duration of which was assured; even during the three years of their existence, the members of the old Parliaments began to despair of the cause, and to reconcile themselves to the new condition of things; in time they would have decided that it was possible to sit in a dignified court possessing an extensive jurisdiction, even though its members no longer bought

[1] Foisset, *Le President de Brosses.*

their offices, and their attention had to be given to law instead of to politics.[1]

Soon after Louis XVI.'s accession to the throne the old courts were restored, the old judges returned to their places, and the changes introduced by Maupeou were at once swept away. This step was hailed with applause by almost the entire community, yet it was not a wise measure, and the unfitness of the old judicial system for the new conditions in France was soon apparent to all. To the attempts at political reformation under the well-meaning Louis XVI., the newly restored judges opposed an almost uniform resistance; they hampered every reform that was attempted by Turgot, they protested against the abolition of the corvée, they were zealous in the defense of the mediæval regulations which checked the development of industry, and their indignation was intense at any attempt to lessen the burden of taxation at the cost of the privileged classes. Their history from the restoration of 1774 until their final extinction in 1789 is a record of stupid obstruction to almost every effort to improve the political condition of France; it was with good reason that the National Assembly swept them away, and the courts, in behalf of which all France had been aroused under Louis XV., perished a few years later without a single voice raised in their defense, or a single lament over their fate.

Even when the outcry over the new courts was

[1] The best authorities for the feelings of those interested in this great controversy, and also the best daily records of its progress, are the *Journals* of Hardy and Regnault, both enthusiastic advocates of the Parliament, and the *Journal Historique*. The protests, pamphlets, etc., form part of the copious literature of the day.

fiercest, some refused to join in the clamor. Voltaire for once found himself in opposition to the popular sentiment. He declared that he had no sympathy for the murderers of Calas and Lally and La Barre, that the judges had often been animated by an ignorant bigotry, and that France was well rid of them. There was much truth in the charges he brought against the Parliaments. The courts had indeed been eager for the overthrow of the Jesuits, but it was jealousy of their political influence that stirred the zeal of the judges. In the past, they had been staunch advocates of intolerance; they were unanimous in their approval of the revocation of the Edict of Nantes; often as they sought to oppose measures of the government, that fatal decree was registered with enthusiasm. Nor did they display any tendency towards toleration a century later. The condemnation of Calas showed how an ignorant bigotry could warp the judgment of the provincial judges, and in this respect the members of the Parliament of Paris were not far superior to their brethren. The list of books which that court condemned to be burned was long; it included Voltaire's "English Letters," Diderot's "Philosophical Thoughts," Rousseau's "Emile," Raynal's "History of the Indies," and works of almost every writer of that age whose name is still remembered.

Nor was it only in the rigor of its censorship that the Parliament of Paris showed its tendencies; the last instance in France of a judicial murder, inflicted under the stimulus of religious bigotry, was sanctioned by a decree of that court. As late as 1766, the religious prejudices of a lower tribunal were shown by a sentence that would have seemed severe in the tenth century, and yet its decision received the formal approval of the Parliament of Paris.

In the little city of Abbeville a crucifix was mutilated, probably by some drunken fool. This outrage excited the fury of a population in which religious feeling was strong; the bishop stood on the bridge at Abbeville, with bare feet and a cord about his neck, surrounded by his clergy and a great multitude, and invoked upon the authors of this crime the severest punishment in this world and eternal damnation in the next; the authorities were eager to discover the culprits, and four young men were arrested, all under twenty-one, and the youngest of whom was only sixteen. It was never shown who mutilated the cross, it was not proved, it was hardly claimed that any of them had any part in it. But a fencing-master of ill repute testified that he had heard these youths boast that they would neither kneel nor take off their hats when the Holy Sacrament was borne by in procession, and other evidence showed that they had at times been guilty of uttering foolish and blasphemous remarks, remarks which would not have been very serious offenses in a grown man, and were still less to be judged with rigor when uttered by young and heedless boys. But the magistrates who had undertaken the prosecution pursued it as eagerly as officials of the Inquisition dealing with an obstinate Jew or a recanting Lollard. One of the accused, named La Barre, a young man of good family and standing, was first brought to trial. Besides some foolish acts and words, which he admitted, it was shown that he studied with approval the philosophical dictionary of Voltaire, and doubtless this helped to seal his fate; the cause of religion would be doubly vindicated, the authorities reasoned, if a blasphemer were punished and the works of a scoffer like Voltaire judicially condemned.

The tribunal of Abbeville found that La Barre had sung ribald and profane songs, that he had refused to show respect to the Holy Sacrament, and had made low and blasphemous remarks about the cross and the mass. For such offenses he was condemned to have his tongue cut out, and then to be beheaded, his body to be burned, and the ashes to be scattered to the winds.

From this barbarous sentence an appeal was taken to the Parliament of Paris, but it met with no favor. Three weeks after the unjust punishment of Lally, the same court listened to the appeal from the unjust sentence of La Barre; it dealt with the heedless youth and the veteran soldier with the same injustice and the same cruelty; the condemnation was affirmed.

The ministers were appealed to by La Barre's friends, but they would give no help. Marshal Soubise, the protégé of Mme. de Pompadour, had already gone out of his way to express his pious horror at the conduct of these youths. Louis XV. was asked for mercy, and even the bishop who had done so much to excite the fanaticism of the mob now requested that the punishment of death should be commuted to imprisonment for life. "How can I pardon one who is guilty of a crime against the divine majesty?" was the king's reply to these applications.

At five on the morning of July 1, 1766, La Barre was aroused and put to the torture, in order to obtain a confession of his crimes and of his accomplices. This lasted an hour, and then, as was often the case, the extremities of torture had to be omitted lest the victim should die under them and be saved from a public execution. He was left for a while on a mattress to recover from the effects of the boots and the thumb-

screws. Then he was led, with a cord about his neck and a torch in his hand, bearing a placard on which was the word "infidel," to the church, where in a loud voice he was to beg pardon for his sins; after this the sentence directed that his tongue should be torn out, and then at last he should be taken to the scaffold. Only one thing was omitted, the executioner did not actually tear out the scoffing tongue; at six in the evening the long torture was over and La Barre's head was struck off.

As a part of the sentence the executioner was to mutilate the offending dictionary. A copy was brought from Paris to Abbeville by special messenger, and was duly destroyed before the public, for which operation the executioner received a very pretty fee. If Voltaire felt that judges who approved such barbarity as the punishment of La Barre, and such nonsense as the burning of the dictionary, could no longer represent popular thought in the latter half of the eighteenth century, surely he was not far wrong.[1]

[1] The best résumé of the La Barre case has been recently furnished by M. Jean Cruppi, based entirely on the judicial records. It is usually said that La Barre was executed for mutilating a crucifix, but this was not the crime for which he was convicted. The other youths escaped. La Barre was the only victim.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE PARTITION OF POLAND.

SINCE the disasters of the Seven Years' war, the influence of France in European politics had declined. The French armies had been unsuccessful; the French king was plunged in vulgar dissipation, and had become even more apathetic than in his youth. It was not strange, therefore, that a country which had always received special attention from French diplomats, and had been to a certain extent a protégé of that kingdom, should have been partitioned by unscrupulous neighbors without consultation with France, and without her taking any steps to interfere. It can safely be said that so important a measure as the partition of Poland could not have occurred during the reign of Louis XIV. without his approval; but France no longer dictated terms to the other powers of Europe, as she had done a century before. Neither Russia nor Prussia was then regarded as formidable; now both those countries possessed powerful armies and were ruled by able sovereigns. While other states had become stronger, France had grown weaker. She no longer held the position in Europe which she occupied before the fatal war of the Spanish Succession, and the results of the alliance with Austria still further lowered her prestige and reduced her power.

The practical extinction of an ancient nationality by neighbors, whose only justification for their conduct was that they were strong and Poland was weak,

has been justly denounced as an act for which no defense could be made. It was, however, a transaction wholly in keeping with the political immorality of the eighteenth century. It was charged against the French Republicans that they refused to be bound by existing treaties, that they overthrew ancient governments and disregarded long-established boundaries, that they recognized neither the contracts nor the rights of nations. For all this they could have found abundant precedent. There was indeed, under the old régime, more formality and more of diplomatic usages; but the powdered and bewigged statesmen of the eighteenth century were as regardless of any restraint, except that of superior force, as was any long-haired patriot of the Revolution. Different phrases were used; in the past, they had spoken of the glory of the sovereign and the honor of the state; after the Revolution, it was in the name of the rights of man and the liberties of the people that treaties were violated and boundaries swept away, but the spirit that governed was the same.

When Louis XIV. married the Spanish infanta, Mazarin said that France could lay claim to the Spanish succession, no matter what renunciations were given. Frederick II. preached the same doctrine in the next century. "One must not break his word without some reason," he said, "or he will gain the reputation of a light and changeable man;" but for any breach of faith he had as his defense that it was demanded by the interests of the state. "Shall a monarch break his word or the state perish?" was the only justification he saw fit to furnish for violating his agreements whenever he deemed it for his interest. "In matters of state policy," wrote a publicist, "we

must not be deceived by the speculative ideas that are vulgarly formed about the justice, the equity, the moderation, and the candor of nations and of their leaders. All reduces itself finally to a question of force." "As to the doctrines of Macchiavelli," wrote another, "he teaches nothing new or unheard of; he tells only what our predecessors have done, and what men of to-day practice with utility."

These quotations from political writers do not by any means misstate the accepted political traditions of European courts during the eighteenth century, and such doctrines found their full expression when two of the greatest sovereigns of modern times were seated on two of the greatest thrones of Europe. Frederick and Catherine resembled each other in force of intellect, in unscrupulous ambition, and in their resolution to increase the power of the states they ruled. The success of their long careers is proof that their methods were not out of place in the age in which they lived. The war of the Austrian Succession had shown the readiness of almost every European power to join in an attack upon an enfeebled state, when there seemed a prospect of gaining something from the spoils. Another nation that appeared defenseless was now attacked, and with better success. When we consider the political traditions of the age, the wonder is that the partition of Poland was so long postponed.

The condition of Poland had not improved since the election of Stanislaus gave rise to the war of the Polish Succession. Augustus III. of Saxony then obtained the throne which had been occupied by his father, but under these Saxon rulers there was no change in the government of the country; it remained

in the state of administrative anarchy which had long been its lot. Indeed, the powers of the king were so restricted that he could exercise little influence in favor of reform, even had he been so inclined, and any efforts to establish an orderly government in Poland would have met with opponents both within and without the kingdom. The nobles would not yield one whit of their lawless independence, and they were hostile to any change that would increase the efficiency of the administration at the cost of their unrestrained freedom of action; as Voltaire said, it was a government of Goths and Franks which survived in the eighteenth century. From the prince, whose income of a million was insufficient to defray his splendor, to the gentleman whose only possessions consisted of a horse, a sabre, and a title of nobility, all were equally unwilling to make the sacrifices requisite to increase the strength and insure the safety of the country; to protect the fatherland, they would surrender their lives, but not their license; and even if the nobles had desired any reforms, these would have been prevented by neighbors who saw their advantage in Poland's weakness.

There was, however, one powerful state which had regarded the integrity of Poland as important to its own interests, and the fear of its interference in the past would have deterred those who hoped to profit by Poland's dismemberment. For almost two centuries, the relations of France with Poland had been intimate; French candidates had twice been chosen to the Polish throne; France had repeatedly promised her protection to the Poles, and the preservation of Poland as an independent state was long regarded as essential to French interests in the north of Europe.

After the war of the Austrian Succession some change took place in the tone assumed by France, and French politicians began to say that it was useless to squander money in the affairs of a country so defenseless and so far removed. "What do we care for that republic and its elections?" said the secretary for foreign affairs in 1762. "A Frenchman for king, a Pole, a Russian, it is all the same to us."[1]

These views were held by some of Louis's ministers, but they were not held by the king. In the secret diplomacy, with which Louis XV. occupied himself during the last twenty years of his life, Poland had the most important part. The agents of Louis were instructed to preserve unimpaired the credit which France had so long held, that at the proper time it might be exerted to secure the elevation of the Prince of Conti to the Polish throne.[2]

The influence of France in Poland rested on long-established relations of friendship, and was considerable when reinforced by a liberal expenditure of money among an impoverished nobility. But since the beginning of the eighteenth century Russia, to a larger extent than any other power, controlled the policy of the neighboring kingdom. After Peter the Great transformed Russia from a country of barbarians into a powerful state, she more and more assumed control of the destinies of a land which was still a prey to mediæval disorder, and which furnished a promising field for the expansion of Russian power. Her influence rested not on friendship, but on force. "The hatred which they have in this country for the Russians," said Frederick, "surpasses all imagina-

[1] Hennin to Tercier, February 19, 1762; *Aff. Etr., Pologne.*

[2] *Correspondance secrète de Louis XV.*

tion." [1] "The Russian power is hated in Poland," wrote the Prussian minister, "from the greatest noble to the lowest peasant. They all hate everything that is Muscovite." [2]

But Poland was helpless from lack of efficient government; her territories were open to invasion, and no natural defenses, no mountain ranges, nor even any great system of rivers protected her vast plains from Russia on the one hand and Prussia on the other. With the principles of statecraft which prevailed in Europe, we can be certain that the dismemberment of such a country must often have been considered. Two hundred years before any partition was attempted, it was suggested that Poland might profitably be divided between the emperor and Russia; later, plans were made for a partition in which Sweden should have a share, and early in the eighteenth century a division was suggested between Peter the Great and the Elector of Brandenburg.[3] None of these schemes took shape, but the condition of Poland became more defenseless as her neighbors became more powerful. Once, the valor of her citizens might have insured the safety of their country; now, it was certain that bravery, unaccompanied with regular military organization and ill provided with money or arms, could be of no avail against the well-equipped and well-disciplined armies in the service of the great European monarchies. There was, indeed, some hope for Poland's safety, because it seemed unlikely that those who wished to despoil her could agree on the division

[1] Frederick to Prince Henry, January 31, 1771.

[2] Benoît, February 15, 1769.

[3] These schemes of partition are given in Sorel's *Question d'Orient.*

of the plunder, and this belief was held by French statesmen down to the time that the first partition was carried into effect. The minister of foreign affairs expressed his conviction that the states adjoining Poland, filled with mutual distrust and jealousy, were really her guardians and defenders.[1]

This element of safety was dispelled when the thrones of Russia and Prussia were occupied by Catherine and Frederick. From his youth Frederick had felt the importance of what was known as Prussian Poland to the development of Prussian power. When still under twenty-one, he wrote a treatise, in which he argued that the acquisition of this territory was necessary in order to join together the scattered possessions of Prussia. The fancy of youth was not forgotten in maturity. When the perils of the Seven Years' war were past, Frederick, in a testament which he prepared for the use of his successor, again laid down the need which Prussia had of this portion of Poland, and he declared that Russia was the greatest obstacle to its acquisition. The instruction was not needed by his successor. Frederick found means in his own lifetime to remove Russian opposition, and to turn his dream of conquest into a reality.

He fully realized the importance of Russia as an ally. "It is a terrible power," he said to his brother, "which in half a century will make all Europe tremble." Throughout Frederick's career it was Russia that he most dreaded; for France, under her imbecile administration, he felt contempt rather than fear; the discipline of his armies and confidence in his own military skill made him always ready to meet Austria; but of the vast forces that his northern neighbor could

[1] *Mémoire du duc de Praslin.*

put in the field, he was justly apprehensive. In the Seven Years' war it was from the Russian armies that he suffered his most serious defeats, and had Russia remained constant to the alliance, he would certainly have been ruined at last. The friendship of Peter proved the salvation of Frederick.

It was natural, therefore, when the great war was ended, that he should wish to form a permanent alliance with a state from whose hostility he had suffered so much, and such a combination met the approval of Catherine. In Poland the two powers had common interests; doubtless Catherine would have preferred to deal with that country alone, but she saw that this was impossible, while if she and Frederick united in action, no other state was in condition to hinder them.

In 1763, Augustus III., Elector of Saxony and king of Poland, died, and the succession to the Polish throne was again open. In the following spring, a treaty was signed between Russia and Prussia, by which they agreed to unite their influence and procure the election of Stanislaus Poniatowski, and they further agreed to prevent any change in the Polish form of government, and especially to prevent alterations by which the elective monarchy might become hereditary, or the right of any Polish nobleman to check legislation be done away with.[1]

Poniatowski owed his selection as the future king of Poland to the favor of Catherine. He had long been known to the empress of Russia, and he was personally agreeable to her, said Frederick, who had learned discretion as to the manner in which he referred to sister sovereigns and their favorites. Stanislaus Poniatowski was connected with some of the

[1] This treaty is found in Häusser.

most ancient and powerful Polish families, and combined with an illustrious pedigree attractions of mind and person; he was tall and handsome, with an imposing bearing; his manners were pleasing, his speech was facile and at times eloquent; he spent two years in Paris, where he studied morals from the Duke of Richelieu, and learned the philosophical jargon that was finding its way into polite society; he was said to excel in the three arts of a French courtier, — he could seduce women, he could conduct himself with credit in an affair of honor, and he could roll up debts which he was unable to pay.[1]

Thus equipped, he went to Russia as ambassador from Poland, but his chief duty was to pay court to the young Princess Catherine. He played his part well; he could quote Voltaire to her and he could talk love to her, and she enjoyed both; he was young and pleasing, and he soon became the acknowledged lover of the future empress. In time Poniatowski was recalled, and this romance came to an end; but though Catherine soon consoled herself, she retained a kindly feeling for the attractive Pole. She was not, indeed, a woman who would allow any fond recollections of the past to interfere with her political judgment, but she knew that Poniatowski would owe his election to her, and that he would be forced to rely on her support. She knew, also, that he was a weak man, and with him for a ruler it would be easy to keep Poland in that condition of anarchy which would further her own plans.[2]

Catherine's favorite did not obtain the prize with-

[1] *Secret du Roi*, i. 272.

[2] "We could n't find a better person for our interests," she wrote Frederick, October 6, 1763.

out opposition, for Saxony furnished a candidate in one of the sons of Augustus III. Though Poniatowski was a Pole, yet his rule meant the rule of Russia, and Polish patriots rallied to the support of the Saxon prince. But they could do nothing without foreign help, and this they were not able to obtain. Poniatowski himself applied in secret for French aid; he knew that it was to Russia he would owe his election, but he cherished schemes of reform for his distracted country; assured of the friendship of France, he might be relieved from his dependence upon Catherine, and free to consider the interests of Poland instead of those of Russia. His election was certain, and a secret alliance with him would probably have been for the interests of France and Poland; some politicians would have found amusement as well as profit in allowing Catherine to elect her lover and then using him to thwart her plans. But the dauphin had married a Saxon princess, a sister of the Saxon candidate, and Louis XV. was always ready to placate his family when they asked of him anything except to dismiss a mistress. He promised, therefore, to support the interests of the dauphin's brother-in-law, and at the same time he allowed intrigues to proceed in favor of Poniatowski. By the king's orders one French agent in Poland advocated the claims of the Saxon candidate, while another constantly proclaimed his friendship for Poniatowski, and as a result, any influence that France might have exercised was frittered away. "Never was France in such a position," wrote a diplomat. "All the world is weary of us as allies." [1]

It was not with such weak vacillation that Catherine

[1] Hennin to Tercier, September 20, 1763.

and Frederick carried on their schemes. Ten thousand Russian soldiers advanced upon Warsaw, while Prussian armies gathered near the Polish boundaries on the west. Those republicans, said Frederick, could see with whom they would have to deal, if they acted contrary to the wishes of Russia and Prussia. With such election agents, the result was sure. Russian soldiers were present at the diet, and entered the hall where the deputies met for consultation; the patriots were put to flight, their leaders condemned as rebels, and Stanislaus Poniatowski was elected without opposition. "In all our history there was no example of an election so tranquil and so unanimous," he wrote with complacency.[1] Tranquillity in Poland was only obtained when her independence had ceased to exist.

The new king made some efforts to throw off the Russian yoke and to effect reforms in his unhappy country, but such attempts at independence were promptly checked. Neither Catherine nor Frederick would allow any changes which might make Poland an independent nation. The agents of both these monarchies were instructed to prevent any alteration in the Polish form of government, and most of all any abolition of the *liberum veto*, "which," said a memorandum of St. Petersburg, "is of such essential importance to the neighbors of the republic." "It is for your majesty's interests," wrote one of Frederick's servants, "that Poland should remain in its present condition of anarchy;" and it was to insure this result that he bade his representatives oppose any change in the government of the country.[2] While

[1] Stanislaus to Mme. Geoffrin, September 9, 1774.

[2] Finckenstein to Frederick, October 5, 1764; Frederick to Solms, October 6, 1764; *Ib.* to Benoît, October 29, 1767, etc.

any plan was opposed that might be of benefit, a measure sure to involve the country in additional disorder was insisted upon, literally at the point of the bayonet. Catherine demanded the extension of equal political rights to persons not members of the Catholic Church. Her efforts gained the praises which Voltaire and the philosophers had always ready for the Semiramis of the North, but toleration loses some of its charms when it is urged by a foreign soldiery who burn peasants' huts and ravish their wives in order to teach liberal principles. The unhappy Poniatowski besought his patron to cease these efforts in behalf of dissenters, and he told her of the misery worked by the Russian soldiers who were employed to enforce the edict. He received in reply only reproaches for his ingratitude to his benefactress. "I will admit to you," Frederick wrote to his ambassador in St. Petersburg, "that on examining Hugo Grotius it is difficult to justify the edict of the empress of Russia."[1] Catherine cared as little for the principles of Hugo Grotius as Frederick himself, and these measures for dissenters soon produced the effect that might have been anticipated, — a large party of the Catholics rose in insurrection, and to the other miseries of Poland was now added civil war.

This rising had no result except to make the condition of the country worse. The insurgents applied to France for aid, and Choiseul secretly furnished them with money, and also sent an officer by the name of Dumouriez, who was to become famous in movements more important than Polish insurrections. These efforts at assistance were of no avail. Dumouriez found some sixteen or seventeen thousand men

[1] Frederick to Solms, February 5, 1767.

in arms, but they were almost entirely cavalry, for the most part ill mounted, who recognized no authority and knew no discipline.[1] Such an unruly horde could not contend against the Russian soldiers, who possessed a certain degree of military training.

This insurrection broke out in 1768, and, though the insurgents had no chance of success, it continued to smoulder and led to important results; for now the question of the dismemberment of Poland began to be seriously considered. Frederick usually receives the credit of having conceived the idea of a division of the territories of Poland among the three confederates, but such a conception was so in keeping with the political principles of the age that it cannot be said to have originated with any one man; at Vienna and St. Petersburg, as well as at Berlin, suggestions of a possible division of Poland can occasionally be found in the state papers. But it was Frederick who first gave to them a definite form, and had it not been for his consummate diplomatic skill, it would have been impossible to bring three rival powers to agree upon any scheme for the dismemberment of a weaker neighbor. It was the first example, Frederick said in his memoirs, of three powers agreeing on a partition and carrying it to a peaceable execution, and he is entitled to whatever credit attaches to this result.

Russia was then engaged in war with Turkey, and, by reason of her successes, was in a position to demand great concessions from the Porte.[2] These victories excited almost as much consternation at Vienna as at Constantinople, and the possibility that

[1] *Mémoires de Dumouriez*, i. 171, etc.

[2] See report of Vergennes, June, 1768, of the intrigues at Constantinople at this time.

Russia would demand Moldavia and Wallachia as a condition of peace appalled the advisers of Maria Theresa. In this state of affairs, Frederick found his opportunity. By his treaty with Russia, he was bound to furnish a large subsidy for the Turkish war, but therein he saw no advantage for himself; his thrift was pained by the possibility of a liberal expenditure with small prospect of return; while in the complications of Polish insurrection, there was an opportunity to add to his own territories without risk or expense.[1]

His first endeavor was to establish amicable relations between Austria and Prussia. He knew well that Maria Theresa would never be his friend, but her son Joseph II. was now emperor, and entertained for the great Frederick feelings very different from the invincible dislike of his mother. In 1769, the two monarchs met at Neisse, and this was followed by a second conference in 1770, in which Kaunitz also took part. Meetings between kings were not common then; monarchs, like their subjects, stayed at home instead of roaming over Europe, and the conferences excited universal curiosity.

Contrary to the general belief, the partition of Poland was not then arranged, but Frederick succeeded in his purpose of dispelling the aversion and mistrust with which he had long been regarded at Vienna. Nothing could have been more harmonious than the meeting of the sovereigns. Joseph and Kaunitz assured Frederick that Silesia was now forgotten and plans for its recovery were forever abandoned. On the other hand, the old king, with his

[1] See the correspondence of Frederick and Count Solms in the valuable Russian historical collection published in the *Recueil de la Société Historique Russe.*

marvelous knowledge of human vanity, flattered his former adversaries. Frederick talked well, and he loved to talk, and the young emperor was content to listen to the wisdom of so famous a man. "At supper," says one of the guests, "the king talked all the time for three hours. The Prussian princes and generals dared not open their mouths lest they should disturb their sovereign or lose one of his words, but some of our Austrian generals slept peacefully." [1]

Frederick praised the Austrian army, to which the young king gave much attention. He assured Joseph that if they could act together they need have no fear of any other power; he excited the ambitions and the aspirations of the young ruler, and found in him the promise of future greatness. "It is impossible for me to be the enemy of a great man," he cried, as he claimed to discover the talents that must make the young monarch famous. "As for myself," he said, "when I was young I was ambitious, but I am so no longer. . . . You think me full of bad faith: I know it; I deserved it a little; circumstances compelled it, but all that is changed." He was even more successful in flattering the vanity of Kaunitz. "Your minister," he said to Joseph, "has the wisest head in Europe." The old chancellor insisted on reading to the king a political catechism, in which he had traced the true policy to be adopted by Prussia and Austria. Frederick was filled with admiration. "Won't you give me your little catechism?" he said to Kaunitz as they parted. "I should like to have it always under my eyes, for I sincerely wish to conform my conduct to it." [2]

[1] *Relation du Prince Albert de Saxe.*

[2] The interview at Neisse is described in Joseph's letters to

It was too valuable to intrust to strange hands, but even if a copy had been furnished, it is doubtful whether Frederick would have spent many hours in its study. The king obtained what interested him more than Joseph's ambitious dreams or Kaunitz's political wisdom, — the assurance that Austria did not feel bound to consult France as to her future movements. In proceeding with his schemes for Polish dismemberment, he now knew that he need fear no hindrance from France. "It is fortunate," he wrote, "that the French should be in their present condition of exhaustion; deprived of their assistance, the Austrians will be more tractable and more gentle. . . . If anything could arrest them, it would be their dear allies the French, who perhaps will not look with pleasure upon the dismemberment of Poland." [1] But France under Louis XV. was in no condition to interfere, and the Austrians, though nominally close allies, did not feel it necessary to disclose their purpose of sharing in the spoils of Poland until the agreement was ready to put in execution.

Fortified by an alliance with Austria, Frederick was in position to impress upon Catherine's mind the necessity of dealing moderately with the Turks and seeking her compensation in Poland. Already a suggestion had been made to that effect. In 1769, Count Lynar presented to Frederick the plan of a partition of Poland, which bore a surprising resemblance to the scheme that was afterwards carried out. The king

Maria Theresa, August 29 and September 25; *Briefwechsel Maria Theresia's und Joseph's II.* See also instructions, etc., published by Berr; for the interview at Neustadt, see the same, and the reports of Kaunitz.

[1] Frederick to Finckenstein, May, 1771.

usually gave little heed to volunteer diplomacy, and it seems doubtful whether Lynar or Frederick should have the credit for so ingenious a device. At all events, Frederick at once sent the plan to his representative at St. Petersburg, and told him to show it to Count Panin, the Russian minister. "This plan has a certain *éclat*," the king wrote in a very casual tone. "It seems attractive." [1] It was not favorably received. Panin suggested other plans; this had its advantages, he said, but as for Russia, she cared for no further conquests; her territories were sufficient.[2] It was Frederick's just boast that he knew when to wait and when the time for action had come. He saw that Russia still regarded Poland as her own, and as yet recognized no necessity for any division with her neighbors, and he patiently bided his time.

Some steps taken by the Austrians furnished an excuse for reopening the Polish question. In 1769, Austrian troops took possession of a small piece of land formerly belonging to Hungary, and called the Zips. It was announced that the movement was made with no thought of conquest; but Hungary had claims on this district, certainly of great antiquity, for they went back to 1412, and these it was proposed to submit to the Polish king in order to reach some amicable agreement. The validity of such claims needs no examination. "I have a very poor opinion of our titles," said Maria Theresa, who had no taste for the unscrupulous measures adopted by her son and Kaunitz. About all that could be said was that the Zips constituted a very small and unimportant strip of mountainous land, and it mattered little to whom

[1] Frederick to Solms, February, 1769.

[2] Solms to Frederick, March 3, 1769.

it belonged. But in 1770, the Austrians extended the line they had established, and under similar claims took possession of a somewhat larger piece, pending the examination of the further titles which had been exhumed at Vienna.[1]

Frederick was ready to follow so good an example, and, in 1770, his troops also entered Polish territory. This was not done under any claim of title, but the pest was raging in Poland, and in his zeal to ward off pestilence from Prussia the king formed a sanitary cordon, and stationed his troops well beyond his own frontiers. Thus the matter stood in January, 1771, when Prince Henry, Frederick's brother, was visiting St. Petersburg, and Catherine for the first time responded favorably to the suggestion of a partition. "I was one evening with the empress," he writes, "and she said jokingly that the Austrians had taken possession of two starosties, and, she added, why should not every one take some also? I replied that you had established a cordon in Poland, but you had not occupied any starosties. She said, laughingly, why not occupy them? And Count Czernitscheff added, why not take the duchy of Warnia, for, after all, every one must have something? Although this was said as a pleasantry, I am convinced that very possibly you may profit by the suggestion." [2]

Frederick needed no one to incite him to diligence in such an endeavor; but when he took a hand in dismembering Poland, he intended that his share should be sufficient to repay the risk. "As to the duchy of Warnia," he wrote, "I have not taken possession of it, because the game is not worth the

[1] Referat of August 19 and October 18, 1770.

[2] *Œuvres de Frédéric*, xxvi. 345.

candle. This portion is so small that it would not compensate for the clamor it would excite; but Polish Prussia would be worth the while. . . . If one seizes bagatelles eagerly, it creates a character for avidity and insatiability that I should not wish to be attributed to me, more than is already done in Europe." [1]

Austria had set the example, and Frederick was now eager to follow it. "I see nothing for me to do," he wrote, "but to follow her and, like her, make use of ancient titles, which for that matter my archives will furnish me." [2] He was right in his confidence as to the contents of his archives; diligent officials were set to work ransacking them, and with surprising promptness they furnished indubitable proofs that Polish Prussia was by law a Prussian province, and in taking it the king would, as with Silesia, only be asserting his just rights.

If Frederick was to obtain a liberal portion for himself, it was necessary that his allies should be well provided for, and he did his best to excite the greed and overcome the scruples of the Austrian court. "Rummage your archives," he said to the Austrian ambassador, "and see if you have not pretensions to advance on something more than you have already occupied, something like a palatinate that would be to your taste. Believe me, we must profit by the occasion. I will take my part and Russia will do the same." [3] He dealt with Catherine with equal liberality. "To indemnify the empress for the expenses of

[1] Frederick to Prince Henry, January 31, 1771.
[2] Frederick to Solms, February 20, 1771.
[3] Arneth, viii. 305.

the war," he wrote, "I propose that she shall take a piece of Poland to suit her taste." [1]

Frederick's allies were less eager or more scrupulous, and instead of acceding to the plan for a partition, the Austrians offered to abandon the portion of Poland of which they had taken possession.[2] Even Catherine hesitated about putting into execution the suggestions she had made. The Russians, wrote Count Solms, wanted to postpone these plans, and were unable to reconcile a project for dismemberment with the repeated guarantees they had given Poland for the preservation of her territory intact.[3] Frederick had no patience with such scruples. "These guarantees are no longer in force," he wrote Solms. "I know very well Russia has given assurances of her desire to preserve intact the provinces of that country, but after the confederates have openly taken up arms against her, it does not seem to me that Poland can claim this guarantee." [4]

In due time the Russians adopted Frederick's views, and either decided that their guarantees were no longer in force, or that it was not worth while to regard them if they were; but while they were ready to agree with Frederick upon the dismemberment of Poland, they refused to deal with him with the same liberality that he had shown them.[5] In addition to

[1] Frederick to Solms, April 28, 1771.

[2] Finckenstein to Frederick, May 13, 1771.

[3] Solms to Frederick, March 12, 1771; Joseph to Leopold, May, 1771.

[4] Frederick to Solms, March 24, 1771.

[5] "It is with infinite pleasure that I learn from your dispatches of the 12th the favorable reception which Count Panin has given to the proposition of my aggrandizement on the side of Poland." Frederick to Solms, March 27, 1771.

Polish Prussia, Frederick demanded the important city of Dantzic, situated on the Vistula, and to this Catherine would not agree. It was a free city, she said, whose liberties had been specially guaranteed by Russia, and free it must remain. Frederick replied to this argument with the vivacity which often characterized his papers. "I look upon this matter as a bagatelle," he wrote; "Strasburg was a free city and Louis XIV. took it; how many parallel cases does history furnish? . . . In return for the risks to which I shall expose myself for Russia, I must obtain the continuity of my possessions. . . . Messieurs les Russes, you wish that I should expose myself in your quarrels, you want my troops, and that in assisting you I should run the risk of a general war; all very well, but Polish Prussia and Dantzic is the price I put on the services I render you. . . . Have the goodness, my dear Russians, to examine and see if you have any need of me, or whether I am of no use. In a word, do you want my merchandise, or can you do without it?"[1] But all his eloquence did not obtain Dantzic, and Frederick left its acquisition to the future.

After much bargaining, the agreement between Russia and Prussia was made.[2] Russia was to have the territory beyond the Dnieper and the Düna; the share of Frederick was Polish Prussia and some adjacent districts. Russia received in population and territory the larger portion, but the districts ceded to Frederick were richer, and had a special importance in connecting his scattered possessions. It was provided that if Austria wished to join, she should have

[1] Frederick to Solms, October 30, November 13, 1771.

[2] The agreement was signed February 19, 1772.

her share in the plunder; but if she refused, Frederick and Catherine agreed to furnish armies and defend their new possessions against any invader.[1] Little trouble was anticipated with the Poles, for they were powerless against Prussia and Russia combined. "We must expect," Frederick complained, "that the Poles will make a great outcry; that vain and intriguing nation makes an outcry over everything, but an army on the Vistula will stop their clamor." [2]

The delay in the negotiations came from Austria. Maria Theresa was sincerely opposed to this unscrupulous division of the territories of a weak and friendly power, and as the matter advanced, she expressed herself in no measured terms. "We have tried to act after the Prussian fashion," she said, "and at the same time to keep the appearance of honesty. . . . I should always think our possessions bought too dear, if they were gotten at the expense of honor, of religion and good faith, and of the glory of the monarchy. When all my states were menaced, I rested on my good right and God's help; now when right is not on my side, . . . when equity and good sense are against me, I have no rest." [3] "The measures we have taken," she declared again, "have been so contrary to honesty and uprightness that even the king of Prussia can accuse us of falseness and duplicity." Of all the pangs which the partition of Poland caused the empress queen, none probably were as bitter as this thought.

In their desire to participate in the gain and escape

[1] Secret article. Beer, ii. 334.

[2] Frederick to Solms, November 15, 1771.

[3] Maria Theresa to Joseph II., January 20, 1772; letter cited by Arneth.

some of the infamy, the Austrians suggested that Frederick might resign to them a portion of Silesia and take the share set off to them in Poland. "What did you say?" cried Frederick to the ambassador. "I have the gout in my feet, and when it goes to my head, you can make that proposition. We are partitioning Poland and not my estates."[1] As the Austrians were to share in the spoil, Frederick was resolved that they should not leave him and Catherine to bear alone the animosity of Poland.[2] Finally they consented to his proposition, and having decided to join in the partition, they showed a willingness to take their full portion. "Permit me to say, you have a good appetite," said Frederick to their minister, as he stated the amount of Poland that would satisfy Austria's demands. At last all parties were content, and the final treaty was signed at St. Petersburg on August 2, 1772. It declared in the name of the Holy Trinity that the anarchy existing in Poland excited fears of the total destruction of that republic; and, in order to pacify the country, as well as to settle their own ancient and legal claims, they had decided to annex the various districts which they then proceeded to take. By this first partition of Poland about one quarter of the territory and of the population of the country was divided among the three powers.[3] The

[1] Report of Swieten, April 21, 1772.

[2] Frederick to Solms, February 5, 1772.

[3] I have followed the estimate made in Russia and published by Beer, *Evaluation de la valeur intrinsèque des parts des trois cours*. This gives the population of the territory taken by the three powers at about two millions. It corresponds more closely with the probable population of Poland under the conditions then existing than the much higher estimates that are usually given.

number of Poles who became Russians, Prussians, and Austrians was about two millions. Considering the poverty of the land and the misery and degradation of the peasants, who were serfs attached to the soil in a state varying little, if at all, from that of three hundred years before, it is probable that their material condition was improved rather than injured by the change of rulers.

The news of the partition was received with little emotion in Europe; such an act was so in accord with the political morality of the time that no one was surprised, and for that reason the community was the less disturbed by it. In Poland herself the announcement that she must surrender a great part of her territories to her neighbors excited a feeling of despair. It was the first step towards the extinction of the Polish nationality; if it was not yet "the end of Poland," it was the beginning of the end. But nothing remained for the king and the diet but to yield what had been taken, lest the three powers should punish a refusal by demanding more. "Some money and some threats will bring these people to agree to our desires," wrote Frederick; "and if we have to resort to force, the only result will be that we shall make a new partition and take more."[1] It was the knowledge of this that made the Poles submissive, and in 1775, Poland ceded to the powers the territories which they had seized. Both at St. Petersburg and at Berlin there was great rejoicing over the auspicious result, and Catherine declared she had never signed a treaty with so much satisfaction.[2]

In the gratification which Frederick felt over the

[1] Frederick to Benoît, November 4, 1772.

[2] *Rapport de Lobkowitz*, September 24, 1772.

successful termination of this protracted and difficult negotiation, there was an additional pleasure in the fact that his old enemy, Maria Theresa, who had so long denounced him as a robber, a man without faith or honor, should have been associated in a transaction beside which the conquest of Silesia seemed an heroic enterprise; her feelings of remorse, combined with her desire that her neighbors should gain no greater advantages than herself, amused the great cynic. "She wept and she took," he said. Perhaps, as long as she took, it was well that she should also weep. It is certain that her partners shed no tears over the woes of Poland. "The Empress Catherine and I were brigands," said the great king; "but that pious empress queen, how did she arrange the matter with her confessor?"

CHAPTER XXII.

THE END OF THE REIGN.

The destruction of the Parliaments was a bold step, but under a resolute government it might have proved successful. Lawyers would have grown weary of starving in behalf of defunct institutions, and the rights of litigants constantly needed a tribunal for their decision; in time the Parliaments of Maupeou might have become respectable legal bodies, before which advocates would have pleaded, attorneys wrangled, and clients disputed.

Before the public was ready to acquiesce quietly in their existence, an extraordinary litigation, incited by an extraordinary man, involved the new courts in an ignominy from which there was no time to recover before their speedy abolition.

Beaumarchais was well known in France, though one could hardly say that he was favorably known, when a lawsuit made him famous. The son of a watchmaker, he practiced his trade when young; he had a good address, a ready wit, and unlimited audacity, and he pushed his way rapidly. Having become watchmaker to the king, he soon exchanged this occupation for one of the innumerable offices that were of no utility except to their holders. When the dinner of the king was brought, said one of the many regulations which governed the Byzantine etiquette of the court, two guards walked before, accompanied by the *huissier* of the hall, the *maître*

d'hôtel, the clerk of the office, and other functionaries, and then came those who bore the viands, with many more officials following them. Beaumarchais obtained the position of clerk of the office, and with sword at his side, he marched with the royal dinner as it approached the royal table. Presently he purchased another office of more importance, and which conferred upon its holder the privileges of nobility. "Let no one dare to dispute my nobility," the author of "Figaro" wrote later; "I have the receipt for the money I paid for it."

The lawsuit which made Beaumarchais a man of mark, and helped to overthrow the judicial system of Chancellor Maupeou, sprang from an obscure wrangle over a petty sum of money, in which a most discreditable part was played by the man of whom it made a hero. The question was whether Beaumarchais had given fifteen louis to the wife of a judge, with the intent to bribe her husband. Beaumarchais asserted that he had given the money, but as he said, this was in order to obtain an interview with the judge that he might present arguments in his own behalf, a procedure which was not then regarded as unseemly. Probably no one was credulous enough to believe that he relied on any argument but corruption, yet the public denounced the judge who did not receive the money, instead of the man who offered it.

It was in 1773 that the bribe was given which gave rise to so important contests. Beaumarchais was then involved in litigation with Count la Blache in reference to a settlement made long ago with Paris Duverney. The count asserted that a paper produced by Beaumarchais was either forged or obtained by fraud; the dispute involved a large sum of money, an unfa-

vorable decision would convict Beaumarchais of a serious offense, and his character was by no means so well established as to make the charges against him incredible; success in the litigation was therefore of the greatest importance to his position, as well as to his pocket. The decision of the lower court was in his favor, but from this the count took an appeal to the Parliament of Paris.

This court had been reorganized by Maupeou three years before. The seats of former members were often filled by men possessed of legal learning but not above suspicion in character, who had been willing to accept places in the new courts, and whom the chancellor, being in no position to be over-critical, had been glad to appoint. The questions involved in this case were sent for examination to one Goezman, and his opinion of the facts would naturally be accepted by his associates. It was therefore of the utmost importance to obtain a favorable report, and if there was a possibility of gaining an advantage, Beaumarchais was no more scrupulous about the means than was his famous creation, the Barber of Seville. A bookseller told him that Goezman's wife often received sums of money from litigants, and that these payments were regarded by those who made them as well expended. Beaumarchais had no hesitation about such a transaction, and the negotiation was opened through the bookseller. Mme. Goezman demanded two hundred louis for her services, and Beaumarchais deposited one hundred louis and a watch worth as much more, which were duly given her. Then she said that she must have fifteen louis for the judge's secretary, and this sum was also paid, and from this small additional request came the litigation which filled Europe with its fame.

It was agreed that if the decision of Goezman was favorable to Beaumarchais, the wife should keep the money, but if it was adverse, it was to be returned, with the exception of the fifteen louis taken for the secretary.[1] Hardly had the money been put in her hands when her husband rendered his report, which was unfavorable to Beaumarchais on every point, and the decision of the court was pronounced in conformity with his opinion. It is probable that the judge knew nothing of these transactions of his wife. She took the money, thinking that if the decision was favorable, she would keep it; if it was adverse, there would be nothing lost, and the disappointed litigant would not make public a transaction so discreditable to himself. Upon the announcement of his defeat, the one hundred louis and the watch were at once returned; he then demanded the fifteen louis taken for the secretary, and in an evil hour for herself, Mme. Goezman decided that she would keep them. That money, she said, was obtained for the secretary, and with it she had nothing to do; doubtless she thought that Beaumarchais would not disclose a shady transaction for the sake of fifteen louis, and this small gain would remain to her for her trouble.

She did not know that she was dealing with one of the most resolute and crafty litigants that the world has seen. Beaumarchais satisfied himself that the secretary had not received the money, and thereupon he made his complaints public. Mme. Goezman then took the only position that was possible, and denied

[1] In form, the agreement was that the money should be restored if Beaumarchais did not have as many interviews as he desired with the judge, and Beaumarchais himself strenuously maintained that this was the real arrangement.

that she had ever received the fifteen louis; the watch and one hundred louis, she said, had been left in a basket of flowers on the mantelpiece in her house, without her knowledge, in the hope of corrupting her husband, and had been returned as soon as they were discovered; the fifteen louis she had never seen. Her husband, the judge, could not let such charges pass without attention; he obtained from the bookseller an affidavit which sustained his wife's assertions and was for the most part false, and thereupon, either in good faith believing his wife innocent, or in bad faith thinking he could crush a man of little influence and not very favorably known, he prosecuted Beaumarchais before the Parliament for calumny and for attempts at bribery. By this rash step he ruined himself and his wife, he hastened the overthrow of the system of jurisprudence devised by Maupeou, and he disclosed to the world that in Beaumarchais it possessed a man of genius.

Such a proceeding was by law conducted in secrecy, and neither the proofs nor the arguments were disclosed to the public. Beaumarchais did not intend that the prosecution against him should proceed in decorous obscurity; he thirsted for notoriety; he knew that the courts were unpopular, and that in making his cause that of the public lay a hope of safety and a chance of popularity. No advocate wished to appear for him and he appeared for himself, and in this case the man who was his own lawyer did not have a fool for a client. All the transactions between Beaumarchais and the Goezmans, statements and counter-statements, criminations and recriminations, were given to the public in defiance of usage and law. Legal papers and pleadings are not often

amusing reading, but these were prepared by the hand which wrote the "Barber of Seville," and Beaumarchais revealed himself as a writer not far inferior to Voltaire in ability to please the public.

There was in the procedure of a French lawsuit an opportunity for the display of such talents. It is curious to contrast the great political trials in England at the same period — the trial of Wilkes, the prosecution of Horne Tooke — with the Beaumarchais affair. If fixed rules of evidence and the elimination of foreign issues rendered the English prosecutions more decorous, they were much less entertaining. The memoirs submitted by Beaumarchais on an accusation of bribery contained dissertations on public morals, on the constitution of courts, and on the rite of baptism; they raked up old scandals; in one, he tells of his chats with Mme. Goezman; in another, he addresses himself to the Almighty and renders thanks for having adversaries of such despicable character; but if much was irrelevant to the question, nothing was wearisome to the reader.

Goezman and his friends submitted their memoirs, in which they reviewed Beaumarchais's entire career; they intimated that he poisoned his wife and asserted that he had defrauded his friend. Beaumarchais discussed the character of his adversaries with equal freedom and much more sprightliness. His opponents in their irritation said that he employed some one to prepare his memoirs. "You had better hire the same man to write yours," was his prompt rejoinder.

The progress of the lawsuit was followed all over Europe. Voltaire perused with genuine delight the writings of a man whose wit was almost as dangerous as his own. Goethe tells us that he read one of

Beaumarchais's memoirs before his friends in Frankfort, to enliven the quiet existence of a peaceful German city, and it furnished him with the idea of one of his plays.[1] Each document was devoured by an eager public; in the cafés, some man chosen for his powerful voice would read aloud to a crowded audience the memoir which had appeared from the press that day;[2] even the king, who knew that this scandalous proceeding was undermining the whole judicial system, read Beaumarchais's memoirs with as much eagerness as any disgruntled lawyer or pothouse politician.

Beaumarchais's task was in some respects a delicate one. Goezman, his wife, and his witnesses, he could ridicule and abuse; the bookseller, whose affidavit Goezman had obtained, was soon obliged to tell the truth, and it appeared to the satisfaction of every one that the wife had received the money, and that the judge had come very near subornation of perjury. The attack on Goezman was welcome to the public, because they regarded all the members of the court as of the same piece. Such were the men, it was said, who held the places once occupied by Molés and Aguesseaus; this was the gratuitous justice that Maupeou had promised; his judges no longer received legal fees, but their wives extorted bribes. Yet these were the men who were to decide the prosecution in which Beaumarchais was involved, and who could condemn him to a severe punishment. He refrained from attacks of which they could take judicial notice, and still, by covert jests and insinuations, he delighted a hostile public. Pamphleteers declared that the cause of Beaumarchais was the cause of the people

[1] *Goethe's Werke*, ix. 567.
[2] *Journal de Hardy*, 262.

and of popular rights; friends of the old Parliaments bade him persevere until he overthrew the judicial monstrosity which had replaced them.

At last the cause was ready for decision, and the judges were in a sad predicament. They knew that Beaumarchais had gained the public sympathy, and that his trial was regarded as their own trial; they knew that his attacks on Goezman, and the prodigious publicity given to this affair, threatened the existence of their body, and that the Parliament created by Maupeou was in danger of perishing beneath the weight of public contempt. They hesitated, therefore, about inflicting severe punishment on a man who had become a popular hero, while they themselves were the objects of popular hatred. On the night of the decision, Beaumarchais was to read his new comedy, the "Barber of Seville," before a select audience, but he was obliged to wait and hear his fate. He greatly feared that he would be condemned to the pillory, and certainly his judges would gladly have seen him there. They disputed over the decision until late in the night; the excitement was great; the loud voices of the judges in angry debate could be heard outside: the hall of the court was like a chamber of deputies, with all the members speaking at once. Finally a decision was agreed upon; the case of Mme. Goezman was easily disposed of; her misconduct was proved; she was, in technical language, *blâmé*, that is she was judicially declared infamous. The complaint made by her husband was dismissed; he sank into obscurity and perished on the scaffold during the Revolution. There still remained the judgment to be pronounced upon Beaumarchais. It was at last decided that the memoirs which had so delighted

the town should be burned by the hangman for their rash and scandalous reflections on the magistracy, and that Beaumarchais himself should be *blâmé*, declared infamous.

This was a severe punishment; it deprived him of civil rights, it rendered him incapable of holding any public office; he was bound to appear before the court and kneel in contrition, while the president said, "The court blames you and declares you infamous;" and yet, as it was certain that he had been guilty of an attempt to bribe a judge, the penalty could not be regarded as excessive. The decree was never carried into execution, and it rendered its victim famous instead of infamous. In the eyes of the public, if Beaumarchais had sought to bribe a member of Maupeou's court, that was the only way to deal with those creatures, and, in expiation for his crime, he had exposed the iniquities of the judges and furnished Paris during six months with infinite amusement. He had been popular before: he was an object of idolatry now. Pitt did not receive more marks of public approval when he was dismissed from George II.'s councils, than Beaumarchais when he was condemned by Louis XV.'s courts. Princes hastened to give magnificent fêtes in honor of the victim of an unjust sentence; ladies sent him billets-doux; a clever hit at any of his adversaries was enough to secure the success of a new play. Friends warned him against losing his head over the popularity his sentence brought him. "It is not enough to be declared infamous," said Sartines, "one must also be modest."

Louis XV. thought so clever a man could be made useful. A book had been printed in London, containing a full history of the early life of Mme. du Barry,

and this was about to be given to the world. The king wished to suppress the publication, and he selected Beaumarchais as a fit man for so slippery a negotiation. He went to London, and there he purchased the manuscript and the entire edition of the work and burned them in a limekiln. The French government paid sixty thousand livres to preserve Mme. du Barry's reputation; it was a high price for a poor article. Beaumarchais's exertions obtained for him the royal favor. Louis XV. soon died, but his successor continued to employ him in similar though less discreditable errands. Within little over two years from the time that judgment was rendered against the author of "Figaro," the court pronouncing it had been abolished and the sentence had been annulled.[1]

The chief embarrassment in the closing years of Louis XV.'s reign was appropriate, — it was the question of the degree of social countenance which could be extended to Mme. du Barry. Severity had not been a characteristic of the court of Versailles, and still there were limits to the indulgence which its members would extend to the royal caprices. The king's earlier favorites had been ladies of rank, and their relations with him had not interfered with their social recognition. When Mme. de Pompadour came from the ranks of the bourgeoisie to assume her place at Versailles, she met with a cold reception, but she

[1] The documents submitted by Beaumarchais in this famous trial are published in the complete edition of his works. References to the litigation and its principal incidents are found in all the contemporary memoirs and correspondence. The letters of Diderot and the collections of Bachaumont tell much about it. The best account of Beaumarchais's career has been given by Loménie.

was charming and accomplished, and she long held the monarch's favor; her position was at last recognized by all; even those who bore no love for the favorite did not endeavor to patronize her, and still less to disregard her.

In Mme. du Barry the king had made a further plunge downwards. She had been a woman of the town, and her speech and manners betrayed her past surroundings; not only was she immoral, but she was vulgar. Yet those who ventured to treat her with disdain were certain to incur the monarch's ill will. "The king is very delicate in all that regards Mme. du Barry," the Swedish ambassador wrote. "He neither forgets nor pardons the smallest action which causes her offense." [2] The new favorite was soon made a countess, and she desired to be presented at court. It was in vain that those who cherished some respect for decency protested against such an act. Mme. du Barry was formally received, and thus became a recognized member of the court. The daughters of the king had sought to avert this additional ignominy in which their father was involving himself, and immediately after the favorite's triumph one of them announced her desire to renounce the world and enter the order of the Carmelites. The king consented, and his daughter, under the name of Sister Thérèse, devoted her life to religion. She renounced the splendors and delights of Versailles, induced doubtless by a desire to escape from a court where vice was triumphant, and to secure the eternal welfare of her father, for whom she entertained a tender affection, notwithstanding the infamy of his life.

On the Sunday following her reception at court,

[1] Letters of February 15, 1771, Raumer, iv. 369.

Mme. du Barry made her appearance at the royal chapel, sitting in the place formerly occupied by Mme. de Pompadour. The king was always devout, and on this occasion, as his right hand was disabled, he crossed himself frequently and fervently with the left. The favorite was conspicuous by the magnificence of her dress, and especially by the gorgeousness of the diamonds with which she was covered. Few ladies of the court found it convenient to attend when Mme. du Barry first took part in the king's devotions, but to compensate for their absence the attendance of bishops was unusually large.[1]

Notwithstanding the approval of the episcopate, Mme. du Barry had to submit to many mortifications. Great ladies turned their backs and great nobles failed to pay their respects, but the number of those who were ready to conciliate the king's favorite, regardless of her past life or present character, steadily increased, the moral atmosphere of the court was not bracing, and those willing to incur the royal ill will in the cause of virtue were in the minority.

What she most desired socially she was never able to obtain, — a mark of favor from Marie Antoinette. The old king busied himself in efforts to obtain from his daughter-in-law some recognition of the object of his affection. Too timid to speak with decision, even to his own children, he besought the Austrian ambassador to become his representative for this errand, and to ask the dauphine to add to his happiness by showing courtesy to one whom he admitted to his favor.[2] The

[1] *Journal de Hardy*, April, 1769 ; Belleval, 129 ; *Lettres de Mme. du Deffand.*

[2] Never in his life, wrote Mercy, had the king given either advice or admonition to any of his children.

king became embarrassed in this conversation, writes the ambassador; he displayed some sensibility of the degradation which he imposed upon himself. But he was so eager to know the result of his efforts that, as soon as the council of state was ended, he hastened to Mme. du Barry's room to inquire about a matter that certainly interested him more than any question discussed by his ministers.[1]

The princess showed the resolution of her character, and she would make no terms with Mme. du Barry; the royal mistress asked only for an occasional smile, and even that she could not obtain. The question became a matter of state. Maria Theresa advised her daughter to yield something, and to give the favorite an occasional good word for the king's sake.[2] "A word about her dress or some bagatelle should not cause you so much trouble. . . . If one demanded of you any lowering familiarities, neither I nor any one else would advise you to grant them, but an indifferent word, a certain mark of regard, not for that person, but for your grandfather, your sovereign, and your benefactor." Marie Antoinette would abate nothing of her rigor; the sight of the woman, who had come from a brothel to be the favorite of the king, was shocking to her pure mind, and she was too young in the ways of worldly wisdom to conceal her feelings.

But her mother and the Austrian ambassador became pressing; the welfare of the alliance between France and Austria, they said, might be endangered

[1] Mercy to Maria Theresa, October 20, 1770. Louis's endeavors to obtain recognition for his favorite are told at length in the letter of September 2, 1771, *et pas.*, from 1771 to 1774.

[2] Maria Theresa to Marie Antoinette, September 30, 1771. The correspondence between Maria Theresa, Mercy, and her daughter contains many references to this burning question.

by the obstinacy of the young princess. At last, wearied by such solicitations, she agreed to speak the word, and as Mme. du Barry passed before her at the New Year's reception she said to her, "There are many people to-day at Versailles." As a reward even for this faint mark of recognition, the king embraced the dauphine tenderly on the following evening, and politicians, fearful as to the solidity of the alliance, took new comfort. "I have spoken once," said Marie Antoinette to the Austrian ambassador, "but there I will stop; that woman shall never again hear the sound of my voice."

If Mme. du Barry met with cold looks from the future queen, she had for consolation the smiles of the king; Louis continued to lavish upon the young beauty the besotted affection of lascivious senility; the favorite had only to ask in order to receive. In politics she exerted no such influence as her predecessor. Sometimes she said a good word to the king for those who belonged to her coterie and were attached to her interests, when they sought office or pensions, and her recommendation was usually effective. Her ill will to Choiseul perhaps hastened his fall; her good will for Aiguillon certainly did much to secure his promotion; but she was too ignorant and too dull to have either knowledge of, or interest in, questions of foreign policy or internal administration. She wished to retain Louis's favor, to be treated civilly by members of the court, to receive all the money she wanted from the treasury, and to buy all the diamonds she wanted from the jewelers. Her relations with the Austrian minister were friendly, but all she sought from the Austrian alliance was some slight recognition from Marie Antionette.

Naturally, foreign ambassadors were ready to be on good terms with the favorite; they gathered in the chamber of Mme. du Barry, as they had in the chamber of Mme. de Pompadour. The English minister describes one of these entertainments, in which the whole diplomatic corps were present to show their regard for her whom the king delighted to honor; even the papal nuncio saw no reason why he should not pay his compliments; there was music and some comic acting, the king made his appearance and spent an hour, and the minister writes he never saw the monarch appear so much at his ease.[1] Louis was naturally diffident and often embarrassed, but he could feel at home in the society of Mme. du Barry.

What she asked for most was money; she was the perfect type of the courtesan, delighting in prodigal expenditure, and on her prodigality no limit was placed. As the condition of the finances grew worse, the waste of money grew more reckless. Terray kept his place by a criminal readiness to furnish money for all demands, except the legitimate needs of the state. It was one of the evils of the financial system that the monarch's personal drafts were honored without supervision or accountability; the drafts of Mme. du Barry were now paid as those of the king; she took what she wanted. In a little over four years she drew six million livres; in one year she received almost two million; when we add gifts of land and of obligations of the state, it is impossible to say what she cost the country; the sum has been estimated at twelve million livres, and the estimate does not seem too large.[2]

Mme. de Pompadour spent money lavishly, but

[1] August 14, 1771, Raumer, *Beiträge.*

[2] Le Roi, *Curiosités historiques.*

much was used in the purchase of works of art; she had beautiful country-seats, where she entertained with taste as well as magnificence; her expenditures were those of a luxurious and a cultivated woman, as eager for delightful and charming things as some Italian prince in the days of the Medici. Her successor, with the millions which she squandered, gratified tastes of a different order. She had indeed her palaces and she entertained at times, but her entertainments were usually too free, even for a court that was not prudish; comedies met the approval of the favorite that were too outspoken for ladies who could read the works of Crebillon without a blush; she liked comic scenes and comic dances, and laughed at them with a violence unknown among the well-bred circles of Versailles.[1]

The comedy of "Truth in Wine" was played at a representation given by Mme. du Barry. It is not a modest play, and some of the ladies present were manifestly disconcerted at the freedom of the dialogue. The favorite was much amused by the comedy, and still more entertained by the embarrassed looks of her guests. "This furnished a special pleasure to Madame, the Countess of Barry," says a reporter of the entertainment.[1]

Of all things in the world, she cared most for jewels, and in the accounts preserved of her expenses during the height of her favor, frequently half of the whole outlay is for jewelry. Probably no one in Europe, not a crowned head, had so many diamonds; the highest joy of which she was capable was to be decked with stones that had cost millions. Other parts of

[1] *Mém. de la république des lettres*, v. 1.

[2] Bachaumont, 1771.

the toilette were not neglected; in five years the bills paid for dresses and laces, and to dressmakers and hat-makers, amounted to a million and a quarter livres. We may say that a hundred thousand dollars a year in present values went for the clothes of a woman who began life in the employ of a shopkeeper in the Rue St. Honoré.[1]

Notwithstanding her extravagance, at Louis XV.'s death she was a very rich woman. Her great possessions in jewels attracted the attention of evil-doers, and she was several times robbed; for the jewels taken on one occasion, she offered a reward of two thousand pounds. She perished on the scaffold during the Revolution, meeting death with as much timidity as Mme. de Pompadour had shown courage, and after her execution her personal property which could be found was valued at over a million livres, and the land she owned was sold by the state in 1795 for six million; to be sure, the price was paid in assignats.[2]

What Mme. du Barry cost the French monarchy was not to be reckoned in money; she helped to dissolve any remnants of the halo that still hovered over it in the public mind, to sharpen criticism, to furnish a text for political reformers and republican enthusiasts. "The throne," said an intelligent and a friendly observer, "is degraded by the indecorum of the favorite and by the misconduct of her partisans."[3] The spirit of criticism was aroused, and where could it have found a better field for exercise than in the government of Louis XV. during the closing scenes

[1] Archives cited by Le Roy; *Etat des sommes payées*, etc., par Beaujon.

[2] *Bordereau*, etc., published by Batel.

[3] Mercy to Maria Theresa, April 16, 1771.

of incompetence, of degradation, of wastefulness, and of shame? Ten years before, another observer had commented on the visible disorder in public affairs and the decay of the sovereign power, had noted that the authority of the crown was decreasing and the influence of the church was lessened, that radical changes were demanded and the spirit of innovation was diffused throughout France.[1] The church, said Hume, had become the weakest order of the state. "I must observe," writes the English minister, "that there is so total a dissolution of papal authority among all ranks of people in this country, that one cannot but suspect France to be on the eve of a great, though perhaps not a violent, revolution in matters of religion."[2]

If such was the state of feeling when Choiseul still preserved for France a respectable position, when the royal favorite possessed charms and accomplishments which concealed in part the evils of her influence, and when the unpopular order of the Jesuits had just been sacrificed to public opinion, criticism would grow no weaker when an old protégée like Poland was sacrificed without France being able to raise a hand in her defense, when the ancient courts of the kingdom had been done away with, and when millions were squandered on a courtesan while the government proclaimed its inability to pay its honest creditors.

Mme. du Barry had been introduced to favor under the auspices of the Duke of Richelieu, who still retained the king's good will, and the two patriarchs in vice indulged in pleasantries on each other's career.

[1] Letters of English minister, 1765 and 1766, cited in Raumer's *Beiträge.*

[2] *Ib.*

The Abbé of Beauvais, with a courage that was not common, reproved old men who still clung to the vices of youth. "The preacher this morning threw some stones into your garden," said Louis to the duke. "He did, sire," replied Richelieu, "and with such force that some of them even rebounded into the park of Versailles."

It was not in such rejoinders that those who abhorred the monarch's career expressed their feelings. "I am distressed," writes Mme. d'Egmont to another monarch, the amiable Gustavus III. of Sweden, "by your eulogies upon our king. . . . Your majesty accuses me of not loving the king. Alas, it is not my fault. How could he, who enjoyed the celestial happiness of being adored, and who would still be so, if he had allowed the least illusion to remain, — how could he find pleasure in destroying all this?" The worst of all Louis's offenses, said another correspondent, was Mme. du Barry.[1]

"Kings are for the people and not the people for the king," said a pamphlet which was the work of French lawyers.[2] The sentiment is commonplace now, but it was a novelty then; in all the French literature of the seventeenth century, it is doubtful if one could find such an idea even suggested. "Our representatives," said another address, "will make you know the cause of the people, by whom and for whom you reign."[3] "If you become a despot," writes Mme. de Boufflers to Gustavus, "you will have no friends. The absolute power of one is not the best government, even in the hands of a good ruler."[4] From every side came

[1] Mme. de la Marck to Gustavus III.
[2] *Maximes du droit public français.*
[3] *Remonstrances of Court of Aides*, 1770.
[4] Letter of October 23, 1772.

criticisms upon a monarchy which had once been regarded as much beyond the possibility of overthrow as the papacy. The public observed no measure in its words, her ambassador wrote Maria Theresa, and matters of state were the sole subject of conversation at the court, in the city, and in the whole kingdom. "The nation," he adds, "pours out seditious words and indecent writings, in which the person of the monarch is not spared." [1]

The life of the court went on unaffected by such criticisms. When Terray was comptroller and Louis XV. was king, money was spent as prodigally as if the treasury were overflowing instead of bankrupt. In 1771, the Count of Provence, the dauphin's younger brother, was given an establishment, and it was on a larger scale than that of many an independent prince. He had eight almoners, besides a confessor and a chaplain, and his kitchen, his stables, and his bedchamber were as liberally provided with officials as his chapel. Such luxury passed the bounds of reason, wrote the Austrian ambassador, and revolted the public.[2] Last night at Marly, writes a lady, "they were playing lansquenet; twelve hundred louis were staked upon a turn of the cards, and still the people are dying of hunger. This spirit of madness makes me sad, and will overthrow the basis of society." [3] Mme. du Barry, continues the writer, sat at the table gambling contentedly with the royal family.

The expenses of the dauphine's wardrobe, says the Austrian ambassador, increased from one hundred and twenty thousand to three hundred and fifty thou-

[1] Mercy to Maria Theresa, April 16, 1771.
[2] *Ib.*, June 22, 1771.
[3] *Correspondence of Gustavus*, iii. 254.

sand livres, and the depredations of the *femmes de chambre* had never been so great; four pairs of shoes were charged every week, three yards of ribbon daily to fasten the dressing-gown, two yards of taffeta daily to tie the glove-box, and so through all the list.[1] No detail was so small as to escape the possibility of pillage, and from these various sources the aggregate results of wastefulness and dishonesty swelled into great sums.

The education of the future rulers of the country was such as we might expect with these surroundings. The minister who kept a special eye upon the dauphine admitted that reading had been somewhat neglected, but, on the other hand, Marie Antoinette was making great progress in dancing. The dauphin, he said, though exceedingly assiduous in his endeavors, made slow progress in the art.[2]

The end was near of one of the longest, one of the most important, and by far the most disgraceful reign in French history. Declining years brought no change in the old king's mode of life, and in the winter of 1773–74, the frivolity and dissipation of the court were in full bloom. At a royal banquet the brilliancy of the diamonds, we are told, made one believe he was in a fairy palace; in the midst stood the king, just opposite was Mme. du Barry, radiant as the sun, and wearing on her person jewels worth five million livres; during the repast she contemplated the king fixedly, while Louis gazed on her with every mark of senile affection. "It is believed," says the chronicler, "that his majesty was pleased thus to disprove publicly the rumors which had been

[1] Mercy to Maria Theresa, February 29, 1772.
[2] *Ib.*, July 18, 1772.

started of a loss of favor by this lady, while her gratitude and profound respect were no less evident." [1]

The favorite was not to enjoy many more such triumphs. On April 28, 1774, the king went to the little Trianon, one of the frequent journeys he made in the hope of dispelling the ennui which had been the bane of his life, and in this pursuit death overtook him. At the Trianon the king became seriously ill. His timidity at the thought of death was known, and his companions were in constant apprehension lest in some sudden panic he might dismiss his sultana and take refuge with his confessor. Mme. du Barry sought earnestly to prevent any alarm over his sickness; she wished to keep her lover at the Trianon, and, above all things, to prevent his sending for the confessor. As the illness assumed a more serious aspect this resolution seemed hazardous; the king was taken to Versailles, and the members of the faculty were summoned to his aid. The doctors made a careful diagnosis and reached an entirely wrong conclusion; they administered emetics to their patient and subjected him to bleedings which destroyed the little chance of recovery he had. What had at first been stoutly denied soon became manifest, — the king had small-pox in a very virulent form; he had never been inoculated; the Bourbons of France, whether from conservatism or from bigotry, were among the last of the royal families of Europe to adopt that safeguard.[2]

The announcement of the dreaded malady produced at court the excitement natural in a case where an

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, November 20, 1773.

[2] The statement often made that the king had been exposed through one of the girls who formed part of his harem is not, I think, well substantiated.

absolute ruler might suddenly be succeeded by a youth whose character was almost unknown. Among the people at large, the news of the king's illness aroused little feeling, except a hardly concealed desire that it should prove fatal. The time was long past when the churches of Paris were full of crowds praying for the life of their king, and when Louis had been truly called the well beloved. The calamities of the reign, the wastefulness of the administration, the nameless ignominy of Louis's life, the disgraceful spectacle of a woman who had been a common prostitute choosing ministers, bestowing pensions, and filling bishoprics, made the French people eager for any change; whatever the future had in store, nothing could be worse than the reign of Louis XV.

At the court, conflicting interests divided those who watched the progress of the disease into groups filled with very different hopes. The death of the king meant the banishment of Mme. du Barry and the ruin of those whose power was built on her favor; it meant the disgrace of ministers and the overthrow of favorites. They all waited with feverish interest for each bulletin that came from the royal bedside. With equal eagerness, though with different desires, was the king's progress towards health or death observed by the opponents of the favorite, by those who hoped under a new sovereign for the power, the place, and the patronage which were denied them now.

The most ghastly feature of this dying agony was the strife over the king's spiritual welfare. All his life, Louis had lived in a superstitious fear of hell; if he did not manifest this in his conduct, it was because he expected to have an opportunity to make his peace with Heaven on his death-bed. Upon a know-

ledge of his character, the factions shaped their conduct; if the confessor were summoned and the sacraments were administered, surely it would be demanded that the mistress, the stumbling-block of offense, should be dismissed before the king's spiritual advisers would guarantee his eternal welfare; if she and all her crew were once sent away, even though Louis finally recovered, he might not summon them back. Therefore, Mme. du Barry, the Duke of Aiguillon, and others of her following, stoutly insisted that the king was doing well, that he would soon be in perfect health, and that the only danger was lest a recommendation to prepare himself for the end should alarm the patient and check his recovery. Among her enemies, on the other hand, loud was the outcry over the wickedness of trifling with the safety of the king's immortal soul at the behest of a corrupt faction of worthless favorites. The officers of the king's chamber were the creatures of Mme. du Barry, and they were bidden to keep close watch lest an emissary of the opposition should reach the king's ear and persuade him to send for ghostly counsel. Her enemies endeavored to storm the position, and persuaded the Archbishop of Paris to visit the king; his duty, they declared, required him to watch with special care over the welfare of the most illustrious of his flock. The archbishop had shown a rigorous zeal in guarding the orthodoxy of his diocese and in refusing the sacrament to dying Jansenists; in such a cause, he had endured frequent banishments and defied king and Parliament, but his religious feeling seems to have been more excited by refusals to believe the Unigenitus than by the immorality of Louis XV.; very reluctantly did he undertake an errand which might

result in making enemies of those potent at Versailles. At last he arrived. Hardly had he appeared, working his way through the room which was crowded with courtiers, when he was seized by the Duke of Richelieu, who was among the leaders of the du Barry faction. The duke was now seventy-eight years of age, his hair was white, his nose was red, his wit was dimmed, and his beauty was gone, but the old man was as zealous for all that was low and immoral and degrading as in the days of his prime; he drew the archbishop one side and talked with him long and earnestly, seeking to dissuade him from advising the king to take the sacraments. His arguments were persuasive; the archbishop went into the king's chamber, asked after his health, and went away.

According to the bulletins of the doctors, the king was steadily improving; but those who saw him often were convinced that each day he was growing worse; his strength was gone, and his mind was often clouded by delirium. At last the progress of the disease could not be disguised even from the patient. As Mme. du Barry was at his bedside on the 4th of May, the king whispered that he should always have for her the tenderest friendship, but it would be well for her to retire to Reuil. On the following day, she drove away. Reuil was only two leagues from Versailles, and her friends hoped for a speedy return. Soon afterward, the king asked for his confessor. The confessor refused the sacrament unless the mistress were sent further away, and thereupon the king ordered her to retire to Chinon, which was over a hundred miles distant. He whispered the order to Aiguillon, but the duke would not give up the battle. Surely you have misunderstood, he said to the king,

and he hastened to remonstrate with the confessor and the grand almoner; they finally yielded and agreed to grant absolution, though the mistress remained at Reuil. Early on the 6th, the king received the sacraments from the grand almoner, Cardinal La Roche Aimon, who was one of the creatures of Mme. du Barry. When the ceremony was over, the prudent almoner started to leave, but the confessor pulled him by the sleeve. Thus reminded of a declaration he had been willing to forget, the cardinal repeated the formula of Metz; the king, he said, now held the purest Christian sentiments and repented the scandals he had caused. This declaration Louis had no opportunity to falsify. On the 10th of May, four days later, the most Christian king died. He was sixty-four years old, and he had been king of France for fifty-nine years. At the last, we are told, he evinced a truly Christian penitence, and his end was most edifying.[1] No sooner was it announced that the king was dead, than all who could fled from Versailles; death in his case had assumed a form of special hideousness, and pestilence threatened those who approached the remains; the body was hastily put in a coffin and carried to St. Denis with a scanty escort of valets and pages; the carriages went at a brisk gait, and at eleven at night, the remains of Louis XV. were deposited with those of his ancestors.[2]

[1] Mercy to Maria Theresa, May 10, 1774; Marie Antoinette to Maria Theresa, May 14.

[2] The scenes about Louis's death-bed were described by many. I have followed Bezenval, who was one of the officers of the guard and had a good opportunity to watch the lamentable spectacle. The letters of the Austrian and Venetian ambassadors, as well as of members of the court, tell of it from their various standpoints.

Among the few who followed the shabby cortége, it is pleasant to find the name of Marshal Soubise. Soubise had been a courtier all his days; he had been constant in asking and successful in receiving; he had been made general of armies which he could not command, and given positions in the state which he was unable to fill, but he possessed some qualities not always found in those of his class; he was sincerely attached to the man from whom he had obtained so much, and respected his memory, even when he could obtain no more; he was among the few mourners for Louis XV.; if the object of his affection was unworthy, he was sincere in his devotion.

Among the people, any feeling of affection or respect for Louis XV. had long ceased; his funeral cortége was greeted with ribald jests by the few who witnessed it. The enormous amounts which he spent in his constant journeyings had long been a ground of complaint. "He goes to Choisy and Crécy," a libelist had written, "why does n't he go to St. Denis?" At last his unloved remains were carried to the abbey, and every one was content.[1]

Bishops, indeed, were not lacking to proclaim the virtues of the departed sovereign. "Louis XV. was the best of princes," said the Bishop of Soissons in his funeral sermon. The Bishop of Arras was still more fervent in praise. "I will not talk," said the holy man, "of the great achievements of this mighty

[1] Of the many libels published at Louis XV.'s death, one of the bitterest showed the ill will excited by his unlucky speculations in grain.

"Ci gît le bien aimé Bourbon,
Monarque d'assez bonne mine,
Et qui paye sur le charbon
Ce qu'il gagnait sur la farine."

king, his glory, his successes, his victories. A prince so dear to human hearts must have been according to God's heart." Not all even of the episcopate declared that the patron of the *parc aux cerfs* was a man according to God's heart. Some said little, and some were not afraid to speak of his evil career. The Bishop of Alais spoke of the evil example that Louis XV. had set his people; he besought his successor to regard the laws of God, and to consider the condition of the unhappy classes who often ate their bread moistened in tears.[1]

[1] *Mandement* of Bishop of Alais. The sale of this sermon was forbidden by the government.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INTELLECTUAL AND SOCIAL CHANGES.

It would be a difficult task to give a complete review of the changes in material conditions and social customs, in religious beliefs and political aspirations, which the long reign of Louis XV. witnessed. Some of those may be briefly noticed, which show how rapidly the country was drifting from the France of Louis XIV. to the France of the Revolution.

It would not have been strange if the latter years of Louis XV. had been for the French people a period in which discouragement and despondency prevailed. The reign had been a failure, and the administration seemed to be breaking down under its own weight. Disastrous wars had resulted in the loss of great possessions, the ignominy of the king's life had helped to dispel any halo that still hung over monarchy, the finances of the country had never been in worse condition, and successive ministers had shown their inability to deal with the economical or the political problems of the day. A patriotic Frenchman might well have despaired of the republic, and have anticipated that the evils of the present would be succeeded by worse evils in the future.

Where despondency was to be expected, hopefulness was found. During the last years of Louis XIV.'s life there was no joyous anticipation of the future to relieve the burden of misfortune and distress, but at the close of his successor's reign a con-

fident feeling that happiness was in store made the calamities of the present seem unimportant. It is in the age of Louis XV., or, to speak more accurately, in the years succeeding 1750, that we find the expression of sentiments that are common now, but are essentially features of modern society, — confidence in progress, faith in the future, belief in the advancement and development of society and humanity. Indeed, it is possible that these feelings have lost something of their buoyancy in our own age, that the community watches the evolution of society with less hopefulness at the end of the nineteenth century than it did a hundred years ago.

There was no distrust among the leaders of the French Revolution; an unlimited faith in humanity dignified essays at government that were often chimerical, and strengthened armies who felt certain that they were battling for the reformation of the world; they had the vigor which comes from being sure one is right, the enthusiasm which accompanies conviction.

This sentiment of progress, this confidence that to-morrow would be as to-day and much more abundant, and that present improvement was the earnest of more in store, did not spring up suddenly on the eve of the Revolution; yet on the other hand we find small trace of such feelings as we go back in French history. In Louis XIV.'s time, there was little demand for any change in forms of government, or for any displacement of social conditions, because it was not felt that change would bring improvement; what had long existed must be regarded as best; in the past were found conditions as favorable as could be anticipated in the future.

Amid the changes and ameliorations of the follow-

ing century, the public suddenly awoke to the idea that their lot was better than that of their ancestors, and that for their descendants might be reserved a still greater measure of prosperity and happiness. "In order to regret the past," wrote a publicist in 1772, "one must be ignorant of what it was." Such a sentiment does not seem strange to us, and it probably expresses the belief of most, but it had the merit of novelty in French thought. It was unlimited confidence in the future which made the community eager to do away with whatever came from the past; having decided that the old edifice was unfitted for their needs, they wished to build new from the foundations.

This feeling that changes in government and belief would bring happiness to all was strongest in the halcyon period of hope which preceded the Revolution, but it was already common before Louis XV. was dead. "We had no regret for the past," writes Ségur, "and no inquietude for the future. . . . What was ancient appeared to us wearisome and ridiculous. . . . We believed that we were entering a golden age of which past centuries gave no idea, . . . and in the future we saw only the good that could be secured for humanity by the reign of reason." "We were disciples of new doctrines; the prejudices and pedantry of old customs seemed absurd. . . . It was impossible that we should not receive with enthusiasm the hopes which men of genius held out for us of a future where humanity, tolerance, and liberty should reign instead of the errors, follies, and prejudices which had so long enslaved and embittered the world. . . . We were soothed by the seductive dreams of a philosophy that sought to assure the happiness of the race. . . .

Voltaire charmed our intelligence, and Rousseau touched our hearts." [1]

To dreams of indefinite progress was joined the desire that France should secure for the world the blessings she would herself enjoy. The ideas of the Revolution were not for Frenchmen alone, but for all men; no such political propaganda has ever existed. France, said the father of the great Mirabeau, thirty years before the States General met, must become the arbiter of the world, that she may insure the happiness of all people; she must destroy exclusive privileges, and leave nature and honest toil to bring felicity.[2] A few years later the hopefulness was equally strong, but the expression already savored of revolutionary forms; the happiness of mankind was assured, but as a means to this end, the institutions of the past must be eradicated root and branch. "The light of philosophy," wrote a Parisian, "has illuminated Europe, and no wind of despotism can extinguish it. Man knows his rights, and the reign of falsehood is over." [3]

The lyric enthusiasm, the visions of spectacular happiness, which seem so strange to the English mind, agitated French bosoms long before the National Assembly decreed its public fêtes, and selected sites from which venerable patriarchs should watch the virtuous sports of the young. While Louis XV. was still alive, the correspondent of a German ruler sketched for his edification the details of public gatherings, in which the prince should deliver a noble and patriotic address; companies of men and women would march

[1] *Mém. de Ségur*, 39, 132, *et pas.*

[2] *Ami des hommes.*

[3] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris.*

before him, and young girls dressed in white with red ribbons meet their happy lovers, embrace before the audience, and be married with the blessings of all.[1] The era of hope for human felicity was already begun.

The anticipation of future happiness did not rest solely upon the prophecies of political enthusiasts; improvement in material conditions, advance in scientific knowledge, the abolition of injurious restraints on trade, created a feeling of increasing well-being, and in all these respects there was just cause for congratulation. There has been frequent occasion to refer to the amelioration of industrial laws, the growth of business, and the rapid accumulation of wealth during the last twenty-five years of Louis XV.'s reign; the signs of this improvement were in many ways apparent to the observer.

Changes in Paris first attracted attention; a citizen of that city, said Voltaire, was surrounded by more luxury than the Roman general who celebrated his victory at the Capitol, and he told with delight of the thousands of lamps which illuminated it, of the cleanliness of its streets, and the good order which prevailed.

The charms of life in Paris delighted many besides Voltaire, and some alterations in its external appearance are not unworthy of observation. Paris was then a great city even for modern times, and its population was not far from seven hundred thousand. Much had been done under Louis XIV. to remove the inconveniences and the insalubrity which attended the gathering of a great number of people, when provided only with the appliances of a mediæval town, and with the increase in wealth improvement became more rapid.

[1] *Carl Friedrich's briefliche Verkehr*, ii. 152.

Formerly the city had not been lighted at all, and an excursion through the streets at night was by no means free from peril. It was deemed a great advance when endeavors at systematic lighting were made, and the danger of being garroted and robbed in the Rue St. Honoré or in front of the Louvre was somewhat diminished. Yet the system was still very imperfect; eight thousand lanterns were scattered about the city, but they gave a dim and uncertain light, the number was insufficient, and the wind often blew them out. With the introduction of reflectors, the light of which was steady and strong, the citizens regarded the illumination of the streets as all that could be desired. This complacent feeling was not altogether justified; not only was the entire number of lamps hardly equal to the gas-jets which are now found on a few avenues, but on moonlight nights these were extinguished, and the traveler found his way about as best he could. To assist those who had not servants to accompany them, there was still a large body of lantern-bearers, who for a moderate compensation would take the traveler to his home, and keep off robbers.[1]

The growth of the capital in the eighteenth century, as in the seventeenth, defied the frequent edicts which sought to establish limits to its size, and with the change in public feeling such attempts were abandoned. When indefinite progress was hoped for the race, the same might be anticipated for the city which Parisians regarded as the centre of progress; the mediæval idea that a town must be held within fixed boundaries, and that its further extension was a menace to morals and society, no longer found acceptance.

[1] Mercier, *Tableau de Paris*, iv. 218.

Shortly before the Revolution it was estimated that one third of the entire city had been built within twenty-five years, and this growth was chiefly by the utilization of vacant land, though much had been done in replacing old edifices by new. Twenty years before, the Hôtel des Invalides had been regarded as in the country ; it was now surrounded by houses. On the other side of the river, the vicinity of the Chaussée d'Antin was fast becoming an important quarter ; one hundred years later, it is in the heart of the business section.[1]

In other respects the capital was assuming the appearance of a modern city. A century before, there were no signs to indicate the names of streets, but about 1728 these began to be placed on the corners, and in 1768, by numbering the houses, the difficulty of finding one's way was still further lessened. Cafés, the first of which were opened late in the seventeenth century, increased rapidly, fostered, doubtless, by a growing interest in public affairs and a desire for places where men could hear the news and talk politics. At the time of Louis XV.'s death, there were about six hundred in Paris alone. Amid all these improvements, much of the mediæval city still remained. There were as yet no sidewalks, and the smells and filth of the streets, if less than a century earlier, would probably compare unfavorably with many an Asiatic town of the present. Down the centre of most of the highways extended a gutter, usually foul and odorous, to help in carrying off the accumulated filth. Cattle were still butchered within the city limits, and the slaughter-houses added largely to the odors and the refuse of the capital. Herds of

[1] Mercier, viii. 183.

cattle were frequently seen in the streets, and carriages were driven in crowded thoroughfares with a recklessness that Dickens has not exaggerated in the "Tale of Two Cities." Water carts were moving in every direction, for twenty thousand men were engaged in furnishing a very imperfect water supply. It was not strange that those who sought the use of chairs, to escape the foulness in which foot passengers were involved, found that only in the morning and in quiet localities could they proceed through the streets in safety.[1]

The growth of the capital resulted in a steady rise in rents, which greatly puzzled those who insisted that the nation was ruined. Argenson several times alludes to the increase in values, concerning which he reasons no more correctly than many modern agitators. "Rents," he says in 1750, "are becoming excessive, and this shows the tendency to leave the provinces and live at Paris, whereas all these rich people should be sent back to the country, there to spread prosperity in the place of need." [2] The next year his laments are still more modern in their tone. "While misery is general," he writes, "never have the rents at Paris been so high, and never was there so much money left with the notaries for investment. This comes from the inequalities of wealth, which increase the luxury of some and the misery of others." [3]

A few years later he again comments with surprise on the increase of rents in Paris, though he says the wealth of the community was diminishing. The rise, as always, was most marked in the fashionable quar-

[1] *Tableau de Paris, pas.*
[2] *Mém. d'Argenson*, vi. 124.
[3] *Ib.*, 355.

ters, which were then the Faubourg St. Germain and the Faubourg St. Honoré, yet even in the Marais and the vicinity of the University, now known as the Latin Quarter, the cost of houses was increasing. Everybody wanted to come to Paris, he added, and in this he saw abundant signs of national decadence.[1]

The inequalities of fortune were greater then than now, but the fact that rents were rising and there was more money for investment than in the past, was certain proof of an advance in general prosperity; Argenson was as much mistaken as modern demagogues when he supposed that indications of greater wealth among some must also be the signs of sharper poverty among others; that when the rich were growing richer the poor were growing poorer.

It was not only at Paris that improvement could be seen; in fifty years Bordeaux and Marseilles had doubled in population, and many other cities enjoyed a rapid growth. Commerce was gaining, wrote an observer, chemistry had made great strides, houses were better built, carriages more comfortable, roads better kept, inns more numerous and cleaner than in the past.[2] Nor had the writings of the Physiocrats been without effect, and there were abundant signs of agricultural progress. In England the aristocracy has always taken an active interest in any measure for agricultural improvement, but in France, until a late day, the subject was regarded with indifference by the classes who owned two thirds of the cultivated land. The peasants were too ignorant to institute improved processes, and they received little advice from those of more information. But soon after 1750,

[1] *Mém. d'Argenson*, vii. 377, 8.
[2] *Mém. de Levis*, 178, 319, 327, etc.

the press began to teem with works on the production and sale of grain, and the entire community took an interest in these questions. Agriculture became fashionable, agricultural societies held meetings in every part of France, they listened to addresses and bestowed prizes on the farmers whose lands were best cultivated. It was said that from 1760 to 1790 agriculture made more advance than in three centuries before, and certainly its condition received more attention from the public. In 1765, an enthusiastic optimist from Clermont declared that his province now contained no land fit for tillage that was not cultivated.[1] This statement was doubtless exaggerated, and yet the amount of land reclaimed in all parts of France was very considerable. During thirty disastrous years of Louis XIV.'s reign, beginning soon after 1680, the amount of uncultivated land steadily increased; war and privation diminished the population, and the national wealth diminished even more rapidly. Passing the era of violent speculation and of ensuing collapse under the regency, an improvement, slow but steady, began under Fleury's administration, and continued with increasing rapidity after the close of the Seven Years' war. No figures show accurately the amount of land that had long been left idle, and which farmers now felt encouraged to cultivate, but it was large. In 1766, lands thus reclaimed were relieved from taxation, and during the seventeen years following, in the bailiwick of Orleans alone, two hundred certificates of redemptions were filed, and Neckar said that altogether permissions were granted to reclaim a million acres of land.[2] Lands in Artois

[1] Cited by Avenel, *Hist. Econ.*, i. 278.

[2] *L'Administration des finances*, i. 172.

and Flanders, wrote a contemporary, that had long been waste, now bore good crops of wheat; vines were growing on the slopes of Provence that fifty years before had been absolutely barren, and never had so much land been reclaimed for cultivation.[1]

The growth of manufacturing industries in France was rapid at this era when compared with the past, yet the great changes produced by the discoveries of Watt and other inventors came a little later, and England far more than France was affected by them. Neither at this time, nor indeed at any time, have the French contributed to industrial discovery to any such extent as the English-speaking peoples. They exercised in the last century a political and literary influence greater than that of any other nation; in scientific discovery they were equaled by no other Continental country, but neither scientific students nor ingenious workmen devised improvements in the practical appliances of industry which could be compared in their importance with those made by the English. Peculiarities of national character may account for this; the French in the past showed themselves conservative in politics, in art, and in business; even since political speculation has been bolder among them, they are slow to make changes in their administrative or their business methods. In a people more inclined to adopt new modes of business, and to venture on new experiments in practical life, possibly more men turn their attention to devising new machines and new appliances.

Apart from any question of national character, a deadening effect on inventive tendencies in France was exercised by the complicated system of regula-

[1] Mercier, iv. 319.

tions through which it was sought to bind industry in unchanging forms. When a man could be sent to the galleys because he made a piece of linen stuff in a manner different from that adopted by his grandfather, it was not strange that few turned their attention to experimenting with new devices. The codes by which manufactures and commerce were regulated in France became even more complicated and cumbersome than under Colbert; his policy of governmental supervision was followed and improved upon.

No experience of the evils of government interference makes people believe that they are better off without it; not even among those who constantly evaded the rules laid down for their guidance was there, until late in the eighteenth century, any question as to the wisdom of the system. When Quesnay and his followers asserted that the best thing the government could do for trade and industry was to let them alone, their views met with more acceptance among political thinkers like Turgot and the Encyclopædists, than among manufacturers and craftsmen.

Four great quarto volumes, said Turgot, were needed to contain all the instructions which fixed the size of every piece of stuff that could be manufactured, which determined the length of threads from which it should be made, the manner these should be woven, the color they should be dyed. "They do for us," wrote the bailli of Mirabeau, "what the Chinese do for the feet of their women: we are bound so tightly in rules that we cannot grow."[1] If one asked for new restrictions, said still another critic, there was

[1] Letter cited in Loménie, *Les Mirabeau.* The subject of the letter was the administration of the marine, but the remarks were applicable to other branches of government.

little trouble in obtaining them, but no sooner was freedom from restraint demanded, than some one's monopoly was infringed upon, and the effort came to naught.[1]

Still considerable progress was made in the latter part of the reign towards freeing commerce and manufactures from burdensome restraints. The duties were removed from wool and from the raw material needed in woolen manufactures, and those industries developed rapidly.[2] The struggles over the abolition of corn laws and over the use of calico prints have already been described. The right to prosecute many trades and branches of industry was thrown open to the community, in disregard of the claims of guilds and manufacturers to monopolize them. On every side the ground was strewn with the relics of so-called vested rights, which had long checked industrial progress.

In this connection, it is worthy of notice that surgeons at last escaped from the tutelage of the barbers, who insisted that surgery could be practiced only by them. The surgeons met with double opposition: the barbers would not allow them to leave their craft, the doctors would not allow them to enter their midst. Not until about 1753 was their position recognized, and were they granted diplomas as members of a learned profession.[3]

Progress in surgical art was followed by a change still more important for the public health and happiness. The French people, with their usual conservatism, had been slow to adopt the practice of

[1] *Carl Friedrich's briefliche Verkehr*, ii. 56.
[2] Clamageran, *Histoire de l'Impôt*, ii. 316.
[3] *Nouvelles littéraires, pas.*

inoculation. It was opposed on the same grounds of ignorance, of superstition, and of fear that were elsewhere urged with less success. Yet the disease found abundant victims; the number of those who died from it materially increased the death rate, and a very large proportion of the community suffered from its effects. One fourth of the women in France, it was said, had their looks marred by the traces of this scourge.

The royal family refused to submit to inoculation, but the younger branch of Orleans, which for generations exhibited a greater readiness to meet new phases in thought or in politics, advocated the practice some years before the king's death, and their example encouraged many others. Orleans first consulted the theologians of the Sorbonne, and by a great majority they condemned inoculation as impious; only nine votes were recorded against this opinion. But he decided to be governed by the advice of Tronchin, the famous physician of Geneva, and the views of the theologians were disregarded.[1] By 1766, it was noted that the use of inoculation was extending rapidly; a hospital was built for the purpose in Paris, and one hundred dollars or more were often paid for the treatment.[2] The spread of inoculation undoubtedly had some effect in checking the ravages of small-pox.

Yet many efforts at reform were still successfully resisted. It had long been the law that vines could not be planted without special permission. The object of the edict was not to restrict the production of grapes, though this was the result, but it was insisted that unless the government interfered, the greed of owners would lead them to plant with vines land that

[1] Sprengel, *Histoire de la Medicine.*

[2] *Mém. de Bachaumont,* iv. 275 *et pas.*

was needed to insure a sufficient production of wheat. Zealous superintendents destroyed vineyards in order to advance the public welfare. The enforcement of this law was not systematic, — that would have been unusual under the old régime, — but it was not allowed to remain a dead letter, and not until 1776 was this paternal regulation abolished.[1] Similar measures were enacted to obtain some advantage for any class that asked for the government's protecting arm. The poor still gleaned in the fields, as in Biblical days. An improved scythe was now made, with which it was possible to cut the grass closer to the ground, and this was naturally preferred to the poorer instruments in use. But a paternal government at once checked this innovation. To use these improved scythes, said the edict, "would deprive the poor man of the stubble which serves to cover him in his cabin and to warm his chilled members." A socialistic republic could not have displayed more solicitude for the poor, or have displayed it with more blundering stupidity. An effort was made to introduce into Paris water-works that would enlarge and improve the insufficient supply of the city. But twenty thousand water-carriers saw their ruin in the public weal, and their protests helped to delay the measure.

As a part of this paternal conception of government, one famous institution of the old régime deserves special notice; it was greatly abused, and it has been little understood. A *lettre de cachet* was an order, supposed to issue from the king himself, by

[1] *Correspondance littéraire, pas.*; Herbert, *Discours sur les vignes*; Chavanne, *Classes Agricoles*, 457; *Mém. d'Argenson, pas.* Argenson denounces the folly of the law, and speaks of the rigor with which it was occasionally enforced.

which a person was arrested without formal charge, and could be confined indefinitely without examination or trial. Arrests were made under the procedure of the courts of justice as they are now, but the monarch could of his own will order any of his subjects to be taken into custody; the person on whom his indignation was thus visited had no legal redress, but must look to the mercy of the sovereign for his deliverance. Such an institution showed the absolute power of the French king; it was often used as an instrument of wanton tyranny, and it has been regarded as one of the worst abuses of the old régime. Orators and historians have waxed eloquent on the injustice suffered by prisoners, confined without forms of law, under an order issued by the irresponsible minister of an absolute king. These accusations are just; *lettres de cachet* were a serious abuse, but the use to which they were chiefly put is little known, and it throws a curious light on the ancient government of France.

It was the political use of *lettres de cachet* which has attracted attention; a prisoner of state, languishing in the Bastille, is to most readers the ideal victim of this arbitrary procedure. Certainly it was used in such cases. Those who had excited the ill will or the distrust of the government were confined by virtue of these orders; their liberation depended upon favor or caprice, and not upon the action of any court of law. But political offenders formed a small part of those whom the government thus took under its charge. A competent judge has estimated that not over one *lettre de cachet* in a thousand was issued for political purposes.[1]

[1] *Lettres de cachet* were often issued for an arrest preliminary

Their chief use was in the exercise of the paternal rôle which the monarch sought to fill. Government interference with matters which are the concern of the individual and not of the state is a serious evil now, but the theory of paternal government was carried still further in the past. La Bruyère said truly, "to call the king the father of his people is not so much to praise him as to define him." The king was the father of the great family of the French; he stood *in loco parentis* to a people taught to respect paternal authority. A more implicit deference was then yielded to the wishes of the father than is now the case even in France. The parent disposed of the fate of his children with little regard for their views, and such is the influence of the customs by which one is surrounded that they generally submitted without question. "My father," said Edmond Restif, when he was ordered to break the engagement he had formed, and to marry a girl he had never seen, "I should be unworthy of some day being a father myself, if I resisted your command on such an occasion." [1]

The sovereign, as head of the state, could properly exercise over his people that authority which every father claimed in his own family. It was natural also that parents should appeal to the king, the common father, to assist them in enforcing discipline over disobedient or vicious sons. A large proportion of the *lettres de cachet* were issued at the request of parents. Every one knows that the famous Mirabeau was arrested, and lodged at Vincennes, and in the island of

to a prosecution in the law courts, and when thus used were merely in assistance of ordinary procedure. This was done chiefly in Paris.

[1] Restif de Bretonne, *Vie de mon père.*

Ré, at the demand of his father. His case has been referred to as an instance of the monstrous abuses to which *lettres de cachet* gave rise; an institution intended to punish political offenders, it has been said, was perverted to private purposes in order to please a choleric parent. Such an accusation would have seemed absurd to the ministers of Louis XIV. and Louis XV. It was for these purposes that *lettres de cachet* were intended to be used, and, in proper cases, the minister was morally bound to issue them. "It is the usage," said Argenson, "to arrest children of whom the fathers complain." A minister would have been derelict who refused the aid of the government to keep a son from bringing disgrace on his family by his vices, and wasting his patrimony on dice and ballet girls, or who declined to shut up some foolish daughter, resolved to throw herself away on an adventurer. Honor, said Montesquieu, was the principle of monarchy, and it was to preserve the honor of families that *lettres de cachet* were constantly demanded and were often granted. The family of Charles de l'Espinay, one petition says, ask his confinement lest he should commit acts which would bring dishonor upon them. There were innumerable petitions of this nature, and if the fears seemed well grounded, a *lettre de cachet* was issued, and the youth put out of harm's way. Such an order, said a minister, is a favor even for the offender, rather than a punishment. Nor was the use of this remedy confined to persons of distinction. We find a glazier asking that his son be shut up, lest he should disgrace his family, and a dealer in fans prays that his daughter be confined in the Salpêtrière, because she is embarked in evil courses. Such requests were rarely refused, whether the petitioners were of high or low estate.

There were also innumerable demands for *lettres de cachet*, presenting more delicate questions than those of paternal authority. Husbands asked for the confinement of erring wives, and wives still more frequently asked for the arrest of evil-minded husbands. Perhaps because the demands of the women were more unreasonable, they were less often successful. This was not due to any lack of zeal, for the petitions of wives for the imprisonment of their husbands were pressed, says Malesherbes, who spoke from his experience as a minister, with much greater ardor than any others.[1]

The grounds upon which such arrests were made often seem extraordinary, and the requests that were refused may have been still more unreasonable. The young Duke of Fronsac was put in the Bastille under a *lettre de cachet*, because he did not love his wife; after some weeks of confinement she appeared at the prison door with an order for his release; "the angel who came from Heaven to release St. Peter," wrote the enraptured duke, "was not so radiant." Some were more stubborn under punishment. "Michael Arny," a cobbler, writes the lieutenant of police, "asks to remain at the workhouse the rest of his days, saying that he will be happier than with his wife."[2] His request was granted, and he cobbled away his life in tranquillity.

It is curious to see the amount of attention given by officials to obscure family disputes, which resulted in applications for *lettres de cachet;* the inefficiency of the government in its proper functions was partly due to the multiplicity of detail in which it was involved

[1] Malesherbes, *Mém. sur les lettres de cachet.*

[2] Letter of September 6, 1722.

in its paternal rôle. We find a secretary of state receiving in his bureau the relatives of a drunken saloon-keeper, who beat his wife, conferring with them as to the best policy to adopt, and releasing the offender upon their promise to watch his conduct.[1] No one then claimed that such affairs were outside of the province of the state, and an omission to interfere excited bitter complaints that the sovereign neglected his duty of guarding the morals and fortunes of his subjects.

One case in detail will illustrate the practice as to *lettres de cachet* and the duties which the government assumed to perform, and we will take it from humble life. In 1750, the wife of a glove perfumer at Paris applied to the lieutenant-general of police with the statement that her husband had become enamored of one Marie Bourgeois, a pretty dressmaker, and as a result the perfumery establishment was going to ruin; its modest gains, once sufficient for comfort and even for accumulation, were lavished on the pernicious Marie. "He can refuse her nothing she asks," wrote the wife. The officers of the government assumed charge of the case, but contented themselves with directing the guilty parties to see each other no more. At such orders love laughs, and the wife was in despair.[2] "In mercy, Monseigneur," she writes, "imprison Marie Bourgeois." "They are about to fly from Paris together," she adds in a subsequent letter; "Marie has already given notice to her landlord." The officers delayed long, but at last the fiat was issued. In July, 1751, the pretty Marie was arrested under a *lettre de cachet* issued by the minister of war, and she was con-

[1] Report cited by Funck-Brentano.

[2] Letter of September 6, 1722.

fined in the Salpêtrière. For a while she remained recalcitrant; her friends endeavored to obtain her release, and asserted that her relations with the perfumer were blameless. But the lieutenant of police was unconvinced; he distrusted Marie, and after careful examination he felt sure that the happiness and prosperity of the family of the perfumer depended upon the removal of the extravagant dressmaker. After eight months she yielded; her relatives signed an agreement to watch her conduct, and the offending husband solemnly promised that he would see her no more. Marie was released from confinement, and the profits of perfuming gloves were no longer dissipated by the folly of the erring proprietor.[1]

In this case we have a picture of the old régime, its arbitrary action, the infinite detail in which it was involved, its desire to make every one happy and good. Between such governmental practices and the theories of modern socialists one could trace many analogies. It was as an instrument of social rather than of political tyranny that *lettres de cachet* found their chief use. Whether employed against a political libeler, a disobedient son, or an erring wife, they were subject to these same fatal objections: the proceedings were secret, and the punishments were arbitrary. Divorce courts and modern publicity have their evils, but they are less than those of *lettres de cachet*.[2]

It was largely from the development of scientific

[1] The papers in reference to this case are found in the *Archives de la Bastille.*

[2] The information as to *lettres de cachet* is obtained from *Notes de René d'Argenson; Rapports inédits du lieutenant de police René d'Argenson;* and *Archives de la Bastille.* M. Funck-Brentano, who has consulted the *Mémoire sur les lettres de cachet* of Malesherbes, has thrown much light on this subject.

conceptions of life and nature that the intellectual condition of a Frenchman in 1770 was so far removed from that of a Frenchman in 1720. "More new truths concerning the external world," says Buckle, "were discovered in France during the latter half of the eighteenth century than during all preceding periods put together."[1] It is possible to exaggerate the influence of the anti-theological literature of the period, and it would have had little effect if the public mind had not been in condition to receive it. Progress in scientific discovery was certainly of equal importance in the great intellectual changes which resulted in political revolution. Interest in scientific study, as in political investigation, seemed to rise suddenly from almost complete inactivity to extraordinary development. In both departments English thinkers had led the way, but if the impulse to such investigations came from without, the work done in France in every branch of scientific research during the eighteenth century was excelled by no other nation, and England alone could assert any claim to results of equal importance. The researches of Coulomb in electricity, of Buffon in geology, of Lavoisier in chemistry, of Daubenton in comparative anatomy, carried still further by their illustrious successors towards the close of the century, did much to establish conceptions of the universe and its laws upon a scientific basis.

Voltaire acted as a leader in awakening interest in such studies; it was his rare fortune to open the way for intellectual activity in many directions towards which it was ready to move. His fame in other branches has obscured his scientific work, but it was by no means insignificant. Apart from the service

[1] *History of Civilization*, i. 627.

he rendered in making the discoveries of Newton familiar to his countrymen, he wrote essays that were not to be despised, on force and on the nature of heat, he investigated theories of light, and worked industriously in his laboratory on researches in chemistry.

The interest in these matters was not confined to those who devoted their lives to them; there was hardly one of the authors who became famous, hardly one of those who were active in questioning accepted tenets of religion or in attacking established forms of government, who did not take an active part in scientific investigations. Montesquieu studied the theory of echoes, he published dissertations on plants and insects, he dissected frogs with much zeal. Alembert owes his fame chiefly to his great work in mathematics. Condillac was deeply versed in mechanics and astronomy. Diderot was a man of varied learning in scientific subjects. The same zeal for these pursuits was shown by many of their less famous associates. The Encyclopædists and the philosophers took a lively interest in scientific research; they were influenced by new theories of the universe and by new discoveries in science, when they came to discuss the received traditions in religion and politics.

Zeal for such studies soon extended from authors to readers. The public mind turned to discoveries in science with the same ardor as to new theories in political economy or in government. Goldsmith writes from Paris in 1755, "I have seen as bright a circle of beauty at chemical lectures of Rouelle as gracing the court of Versailles." Petit lectured on anatomy to crowded houses, and among his listeners were gentlemen and ladies of fashion, as well as professional

students. The rooms of lecturers on other subjects, that ordinarily excite no more popular interest, were equally thronged and by similar auditors.

Whatever were the faults of the age of Louis XV., intellectual indifference was not among them. Perhaps it was because so many subjects had been deemed too sacred to be discussed that, when every matter of human interest was at last brought to the bar of public opinion, the public was aroused by themes which were to them as new as they were important. Religion, politics, and science, during the most of Louis XIV.'s reign, probably occupied less of the public mind than the doings of the king and his court; the truths of religion were established and not to be debated, the form of government was settled and not to be questioned, science was an unknown field. Two generations later, when men were discussing all these matters, it was like the discovery of a new world of thought. Voltaire said that every one suddenly gave up reading novels and began talking about wheat, but that was only one phase of a widespread interest in public affairs. Accustomed to the discussion of political questions, which has been a part of English history and was found in America from the first settlement of the colonies, it is hard to realize how little attention was given to such matters in France. The religious controversies of the sixteenth century did, indeed, stir popular feeling: religious beliefs were strong; the curés and vicars exerted a great influence upon the masses, from whom in their modes of life and thought they were little removed, and they were diligent instigators of political passion when the question was the defense of the faith or the exclusion of a heretic from the throne.

But when these disputes had ceased to agitate the community, the interest of the French public in questions of public policy was slight, and their knowledge of them was still less. It was natural that it should be so among the peasantry, for they were exceedingly ignorant, but in this respect the condition of the bourgeoisie and of the inhabitants of the provincial cities was not very different. The lack of any appliances by which news of public affairs could be disseminated had much to do with this state of affairs. In the seventeenth century, newspapers could hardly be said to exist, and certainly they furnished little intelligence of what was going on in the world. Travel was difficult and costly, people rarely left their homes, the horizon of a peasant was confined to the few acres he cultivated, the shopkeeper of the neighboring town knew little more of the outside world; even the provincial nobleman had probably never seen Paris, and, unless he had served in the wars, he had not been a hundred miles from the dilapidated château which he inherited from his ancestors. Thus there was little opportunity for news to spread from mouth to mouth; there were no meetings at the village tavern where some traveler related the last doings from Paris or Versailles, told of the achievements of Louis the Great, the reforms of Colbert, or the legal changes introduced by Aguesseau.

One minister might be succeeded by another, the friendship of Spain renounced for that of England, triple or quadruple alliances formed, and a surprisingly large proportion of the French people knew nothing about these matters, and no more thought of discussing the wisdom of such changes than of discussing the policy of the Great Mogul.

In Paris it was otherwise; even if newspapers were lacking, those who lived at the seat of government heard something of events of importance. But except at periods when public feeling was aroused by exceptional causes, such as the troubles of the Fronde and the speculations of the Mississippi, the people indulged in little discussion of the affairs of the government.

To the small class who were members of the court, who formed part of the life of Versailles and were admitted to the presence of the sovereign, affairs of state could not be without interest. Even there the questions most discussed were those of personal interest, the choice of ministers, the bestowal of honors, the granting of pensions. The courtier of Versailles no more disturbed himself about changes in procedure, or systems of taxation, or improvements of roads, than did a peasant of Auvergne. Books on political economy were almost unknown; the art of government was regarded as a special science, as little to be investigated by the public as Egyptian hieroglyphics, and which concerned alone the king and those whom he chose as his counselors.

This lack of interest was not universal. Vauban studied economic questions with so much intelligence that his suggestions, if adopted, would have done much to alleviate innumerable evils; but such works met with no favor. Vauban gained nothing by his public zeal except the ill will of the king, and his merits as the greatest French engineer did not atone for the crime of saying that the peasants were too heavily taxed. Nor could he find any consolation in his disgrace by the thought that, if he had not persuaded the ruler, he had influenced the public mind,

and the seed thus sown would bring fruit in time. The questions which he discussed did not interest the public mind. Many, indeed, found the burden of taxation grievous, but the most of those on whom taxation fell heaviest did not know enough to read books, and took their lot with as much resignation as if it were part of the laws of nature.

We find the first dawnings of a more general interest in public affairs in the early part of Louis XV.'s reign, and it was widespread long before its close. "Thirty years ago," wrote Argenson, "the public was not curious about the news of the state; now everybody reads the 'Gazette' of Paris, even in the provinces." [1] The increasing interest demanded better means for its gratification than had formerly existed, but Paris still furnished only two newspapers. To the "Gazette" was added the "Mercury," of which Marmontel was for a while the editor. If political dissertations were rare in them, they were respectable as literary journals, and they contained some accounts of current events.

But there was hardly an economical or political question which did not elicit a copious supply of books, pamphlets, poems, and pasquinades. There was no trouble in getting the information one desired about the corn laws, or the expulsion of the Jesuits, or the quarrels over Jansenism, or the disputes between the king and the Parliament. The "Nouvelles Ecclésiastiques" was the Jansenist organ, and it furnished an account of all items of religious interest, regardless of the government prohibition. The economists had an organ for the dissemination of economical truths; any important event or edict was usually

[1] *Mém. d'Argenson*, 1754.

published at once, and the sheet or broadside was offered for sale much after the fashion of the extras of our own newspapers, and could be bought for a few sous. These means of furnishing intelligence were indeed confined to Paris; a provincial newspaper was a thing unknown. On the eve of the Revolution, Arthur Young could find no local newspaper, and only scattered and ancient copies of the Paris journals, from Strasburg to Besançon.[1]

As interest grew in public questions, the number of publications increased; the more people talked about such matters, the more there were who wrote of them, and the more that was written on such subjects, the more there were to talk about them. The literature of the day to an unusual extent was political literature. Except occasionally a flood of pasquinades and epigrams, like the Mazarinades of the Fronde, few political pamphlets issued from the French press in the seventeenth century. Under Louis XV. the censure was nominally as strict as under his great-grandfather, yet during the last twenty-five years of his reign the presses groaned with treatises and discussions on every phase of government. "The rage to write about matters of finance had passed like an epidemic," wrote Bachaumont, "until a declaration forbidding such writings stirred them into new activity." The metaphor was just; the eagerness for such writings spread over the land like an epidemic, though it is doubtful whether an edict forbidding them was required to keep up the supply.

The famous remark attributed to Louis XIV., "I am the state," not only expressed accurately the views of its supposed author, but his subjects agreed with

[1] Young's *Travels in France*, July, 1789.

him. One can take instances of every kind in the seventeenth century: an address of the Parliament, the ode of a poet, an article in the "Gazette," the letter of some private person, in which public matters are discussed; the word king will be found fifty times where the word state or country will be found once. It was a sort of political anthropomorphology; the idea of the state was embodied in the man who ruled over it. The change in this regard can be noticed by any one familiar with the literature of the two periods, and it impressed itself on contemporaries. "It can be observed," wrote Argenson in 1754, "that the words state and nation were never so much repeated as now; these two words were hardly pronounced under Louis XIV.; indeed, the idea of them hardly existed. Never has the community been so much instructed concerning liberty and the rights of the nation as to-day." "This," he added, "comes to us from the Parliament and from the English." [1]

In the last statement he certainly was correct. It was in the long contest with the Parliaments that demands were frequently heard for the popular rights, which it was claimed the ancient constitution secured to citizens, while in the political writings during the first half of the eighteenth century, the influence of English ideas is evident on every page. Voltaire spent three years in England. Montesquieu, Helvetius, Buffon, and Gournay, besides many others, not only visited England, but were influenced by the people and the modes of thought and government which were there found. In the seventeenth century, it was almost as rare to find a Frenchman who had traveled in England, as to find one who had read an English

[1] *Mém. d'Argenson*, viii. 315.

book, and French political thought was as little influenced by that of England as by that of Turkey. The only opinion as to the English government in which most French people would have agreed was that it was a very bad one, that the people were insubordinate heretics, who dethroned their lawful rulers and were probably reserved by Providence for grievous punishments.

Fifty years later, principles that had been viewed with indifference or with aversion became the object of unusual interest. English political principles and their fruits were brought before the public by Voltaire, with his talent for luminous exposition and for disseminating views for which the public mind was prepared. His "English Letters" were condemned by the court and burned by the hangman, but they were read none the less.

For the ordinary mind, English political principles found their best advocate in their results. It was not strange that, at the close of the Seven Years' war, methods of government which had made England victorious in the eastern and western hemispheres should seem better than those which left France defeated and disgraced under Louis XV. "This word liberty, which is familiar in these days," said an enemy of the new philosophy, "is very dangerous. It has come to us from England, and perhaps this is not one of the least injuries which our neighbors have inflicted on us." [1]

The influence of English ideas was shown in the imitation of English customs. There had been little trace of this in the past; occasionally some reckless bet, or some novel horse race, was referred to by a

[1] Pesselier, in his reply to Mirabeau's *Theorie de l'impôt*, 1759.

contemporary as something copied from the English, but such diversions were almost the only traces of the effect of English institutions on French thought.

In the latter part of the century, English fashions found ready entrance in France. The elaborate dress of a French gentleman was changed to resemble the plainer attire of an English citizen. The popularity of Rousseau's doctrines, the demand for simpler and less artificial modes of life, produced changes in clothes as well as customs, but the example of neighbors, whose liberties and wise institutions were now extolled by all, was not without its effect. In place of a powdered wig, a coat covered with embroidery, and a waistcoat adorned with laces, the man of fashion wore a plain suit, fitting close to the body, and his hair cut short.[1]

Those of sporting tastes arrayed themselves in enormous English redingotes to attend races at Vincennes, which as closely as possible imitated those at Newmarket. In more important matters the English were held up as examples. "Read Shakespeare, O young writers," said a French patriot; "study him as the true interpreter of nature." The imitation of English dress or English races was not important, but the influence of English ideas was far-reaching. In France, said Voltaire, they forbade the exportation of wheat and the importation of ideas. The embargo was not effective. The ideas of English freethinkers were the starting-point for the first generation of French writers who attacked the religion they found established, and on political thought the effect of English institutions was still more marked. In both respects, indeed, this influence can be seen more dis-

[1] *Tableau de Paris*, vii. 44.

tinctly in the generation that preceded the Revolution than among those who took part in it. It was on the philosophy of Rousseau that the leaders of the Revolution were nourished, and there is little trace of English thought in the "Social Contract."

Among the phases of English life which made that land seem a country where wisdom ruled and happiness prevailed, was the freedom of discussion which was there allowed. "One must disguise at Paris," said Voltaire, "what he could not say too strongly at London." "O brave English," wrote Mercier, "your books are not submitted to the orders of M. Le Camus de Neville."[1] These feelings were natural, and yet a writer of ability had no cause for complaint because he was born a Frenchman in the age of Louis XV. If he were a soldier or a statesman, his lot had fallen in evil days, but this was not so if literature was the field in which he was fitted to shine.

Much has been said of the persecution to which thought was subjected under Louis XV., of the number of writers who found themselves in the Bastille, and of printers who found themselves in the galleys. Yet so far as any actual suppression of new doctrines was concerned, there was no more of it under Louis XV. than under George III. The penalties denounced were more severe than those which now regulate the censorship of the press in any land, the punishments inflicted were occasionally as cruel as might befall the man who criticised the conduct of a pasha in a Turkish province, but the measures taken failed to check the evil. There were indeed few writers who altogether escaped the rigor of the laws against publications which the officials declared to be

[1] *Tableau de Paris*, iii. 337.

contrary to good morals and sound doctrine, but there was not a single writer who was silenced, or whose activity was lessened, by such means. There was no thorough-going and continuous persecution which might have choked free thought or its expression. The French government, in its treatment of literature, adopted the worst policy for the end it had in view; its action was always irritating and never efficacious.

The list of writers who were confined at one time or another in the Bastille or Vincennes was indeed a long one. Voltaire began his experience in prison life in the Bastille; Diderot and Marmontel and Morellet and many others found themselves in confinement during their literary career.

The treatment imposed upon these sufferers for free thought was not very severe. Marmontel shared the fate of many of his associates; he was thrown into the Bastille on a frivolous charge, and he owed his imprisonment to the groundless ill will of a powerful nobleman. He was accused of having ridiculed the Duke of Aumont. The offense consisted in reciting before a party of intimate friends some verses in which the duke was discussed with levity; this was reported to the nobleman, and he demanded the punishment of the poet. The penalty would hardly operate as a deterrent, and apparently the officials wished to show that they regarded the whole matter as a farce. Marmontel was allowed to keep his servant; in the great room assigned to him in the Bastille he found a good fire lighted, and he was received with assiduous politeness by the attendants. In due time his dinner was served: an excellent soup, beef, a boiled capon, vegetables, a choice pear, a bottle of

old Burgundy, and a cup of fragrant Mocha. Furnished with the books which he desired, he then peacefully devoted himself to the translation of the classics. After ten days of no more rigorous imprisonment he was restored to liberty; he lost his position as editor of a court journal, but as a compensation he tells us he soon found his way into the Academy.[1]

In 1760, the Abbé Morellet was thrown into the Bastille, and his imprisonment was due to some remarks offensive to the Princess of Robecq, for it was often more dangerous to ridicule a person of influence than to attack the government or the church. The feelings with which the abbé received his punishment show how little literature was disturbed by the weak persecution it had to endure. Abundantly supplied with books, nourished on the ample fare and the good wine which was kept for prisoners in the Bastille, he occupied his time profitably. "I was certain," he writes, "that my imprisonment could not last over six months. Persecuted, I should become more known, . . . and these months in the Bastille would be an excellent recommendation and infallibly secure my fortune. . . . Such were the hopes in which I indulged, and they have not been disappointed. . . . I did not misjudge the results of this event in my literary life."[2] His fate was even better than he had anticipated, for after two months of good dinners and quiet work, which he devoted to writing a treatise on the liberty of the press, he was released, to find his literary position established, and to pursue his way towards the chair in the Academy, which in due time he secured.

[1] *Mém. de Marmontel*, liv. 6 and 7.

[2] *Mém. de Morellet*, 92–99.

The judicial condemnation of books as immoral and dangerous was a penalty inflicted with much more frequency. In the long list of books that were burned by the common hangman could be found a large proportion of those which had any celebrity in their day or have any interest for posterity; it thus becomes a roll of honor rather than of infamy. It is questionable whether literature had any just cause to complain of this form of persecution, for all that the government accomplished by ordering a book to be burned by the hangman was to increase its circulation.[1] "The only books which go through several editions," wrote Grimm, in 1757, "are those which have been condemned. A publisher should pay the magistrates to burn his book, in order to sell it." This was true because the government of Louis XV. combined the forms of a severe despotism with the procedure of a careless and indifferent administration; having sentenced a book to be burned, it troubled itself little more with its fate. Nominally, those who sold it were subject to grievous penalties, but as matter of fact, they disposed of the works of Voltaire and Diderot almost as openly as those of Bossuet and Racine, and the former had a much larger sale; though many of their writings were under the ban of this law, they could be obtained in Paris with as little trouble as the works of Bolingbroke or Tindal in London.

The occasional activity of the officials resulted in many books being printed in Amsterdam which otherwise would have been published at Paris. License to print could not be obtained, and it was not worth while to risk a seizure of the plates, but copies of the work were at once sent to the capital, often with very

[1] *Mém. de Ségur*, 16; *Cor. Lit.*; and Bachaumont, *pas.*

little attempt at secrecy, and there they were sold. The extent of the book business showed the interest literature excited and how little the action of the government interfered with it; in 1774, the book trade of Paris was four times as large as that of London; it would be curious to know what proportion of the entire sales were works that had been condemned by the court.

There was no uniformity in the manner in which dangerous works were treated. The government prohibited the publication of the Encyclopædia and then again allowed it, and this was several times repeated. The church was uniform in its demand for a more rigorous censorship; the clergy and the Archbishop of Paris still insisted that intolerance was a principle of Christianity, and that the sword of the state must fall upon atheistic publicists as well as upon heretical Huguenots, but these demands by no means met with a prompt response. In 1770, the clergy suddenly roused to the fact that the Encyclopædia was freely sold, and at their complaint the government seized the whole of the new edition which had just appeared; but the harmlessness of such proceedings was known. "The books have been taken to the Bastille instead of being burned," writes Bachaumont, "and after a while they will be given back to the publishers."[1]

Such an erratic persecution of literature was of some use as an advertisement and of no use as a preventative. It was amazing, a journalist wrote at the very time of these proceedings against the Encyclopædia, to see the number of books attacking religion that were published with equal persistency and freedom.

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, 1770.

Still, the laws governing the press were of the greatest severity, and these were occasionally enforced in a manner which seemed the harsher because sellers and printers were encouraged to proceed by the immunity they usually enjoyed. In 1768, two men were branded and sent to the galleys, one for nine years, one for five, and a woman was sentenced to five years' imprisonment, and their offense was selling three prohibited books, one of which was Voltaire's "L'homme aux quarante écus."[1] Such outrages were not infrequent, but when the officers of the law were roused to this unwonted activity, the severest sufferers were obscure printers or book-dealers, and not the men who wrote the offending books.

The greatest zeal in such matters was shown by the Parliament, which, in a taste for persecution, was in no way behind the bishops, and the sale of books which questioned the wisdom or the justice of the courts was forbidden with especial strictness. When the Jesuits were expelled, Voltaire warned the friends of tolerance not to exult too much, and the conduct of the courts justified his apprehensions; the Jansenists were more inclined towards a persistent repression of philosophical literature than the Jesuits.

When Voltaire's "History of the Parliaments" appeared, in which the omniscience of the courts was freely questioned, the judges were so vigorous in their efforts to prevent its sale that it was noted that the book could be procured only with considerable difficulty, and this was so rare an occurrence as to deserve comment.

Of so little importance were the weak efforts of the

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, October, 1768.

government at repression that even the pecuniary rewards of literature were better than they had ever been before. A successful writer did not find the assured income which is not unfrequent in our times, but this was not peculiar to France; the reading public there, as elsewhere, was small when compared to what it has since become. Yet not only Voltaire, but many of the writers whose works were under the ban of the government, received more money from the sale of their books than their English brethren who enjoyed freedom from persecution. If literature profited little by the patronage it received from Louis XIV., it suffered still less from the persecution to which it was subjected under Louis XV.

However tyrannical were the maxims of the government, there has never been a time when the position of literary men was more brilliant; social recognition and popular applause excited the ambition of those who had ability for the work. If a writer spent a few months in the Bastille by virtue of a *lettre de cachet*, his lot was no worse than that of the nobleman who had given offense at court, or the youth whose career of improvidence excited the apprehension of his parents; if his book was burned by the hangman, an increased sale compensated for this indignity, and in return for such evils he wielded an influence and commanded a position which might gratify the most ambitious.

The danger for literature lay more in indiscriminate adulation than in any persecution. Popular interest was not confined to the authors of amusing novels or ingenious plays; the writers of science, of political economy, and most of all, those who treated of religion and politics, found an audience ready to

devour all they wrote. This was the more agreeable because it insured an amount of social attention that is not often bestowed on the representatives of literature. Voltaire and Rousseau, Diderot and Alembert, and their associates, were the objects of assiduous flattery; they were the ornaments of the salons of great nobles, of ladies of fashion, of farmers of revenue; their utterances were listened to with respectful and reverential interest, their actions were discussed, their conduct was praised or criticised; they received the incense which consists in being constantly in the mouths and the thoughts of one's fellows. Horace Walpole, in his letters from Paris, complains of these philosophers and men of literary renown, whom he found overbearing and wearisome. In telling of the offense they caused him, he unconsciously portrays the adulation which they received. His own interest in literature was confined to noble authors, and the French philosophers were disagreeable to his vanity because they obtained in most salons an amount of attention that was given to no one else. He found men like Diderot and Rousseau occupying in Paris positions of social prominence, which were not awarded to Johnson and Goldsmith in London; the philosophers would have been less disagreeable to him, if they had been less courted in the social circles in which he himself moved.[1]

A little later Arthur Young comments on the same condition of affairs. "I should pity the man," he writes, "who expected, without other advantages of a very different nature, to be well received in a brilliant circle at London, because he was a fellow of the Royal Society. But this would not be the case with a mem-

[1] Walpole's *Letters* for 1765–66, *pas.*

ber of the Academy of Science at Paris; he is sure of a good reception everywhere."[1]

Amid other changes the bourgeoisie was growing in social and political importance. Discontented radicals assert that the middle classes have appropriated to themselves the advantages of the French Revolution, and the masses have not received their share; that in place of an aristocracy has been substituted a bourgeoisie, and the lot of the laborer is none the better. However this may be, the development of an opulent bourgeoisie had much to do in bringing on the Revolution from which it is charged they have unjustly profited.

The existence of a considerable class, not noble by birth but influential from wealth, was a marked feature of Louis XV.'s reign. Large wealth was acquired by many, because there were opportunities for accumulation such as had not before existed. Great fortunes were indeed made under Louis XIV. Crozat, the merchant, and Bernard, the banker, were millionaires, but such cases were rare; the era of extensive operations had not begun, and trade, for the most part, was conducted on the limited scale of mediæval times. Many influences helped to change this condition of affairs. The measures of Colbert were not without effect in building up large industries, which should replace petty trades and jealously limited guilds. The magnitude of Law's enterprises imparted a life and boldness to commercial operations that was not altogether checked by the bankruptcy of the Mississippi Company. We have already seen the impetus given to trade with the colonies in the latter part of Louis XV.'s reign, and the figures to which that com-

[1] Young's *Travels in France*, 104.

merce attained. Notwithstanding the troubles and the final ruin of the French East India Company, its operations were more extended and important than those of any similar enterprise in the preceding century. When business operations increased in magnitude, many acquired wealth in amounts that heretofore had been unknown, except among the nobility and public contractors. In the seventeenth century, most of the considerable fortunes were derived from the government, either by nobles like the Condés or the Bouillons, who were given estates and pensions, or by ministers and contractors who profited largely from the public, by legal or illegal means.

In the following century, the increased volume of business allowed the creation of fortunes among the commercial classes of a size which had heretofore been rare, and the influence of money, earned and not inherited, began to be important. A prosperous upper middle class desired social recognition, and was sure in time to demand a certain share of political power. In this rapidly increasing plutocracy, the most conspicuous portion was still held by the farmers of revenue. They were rich and influential under Louis XIV., they were more so under his successor; the taxes imposed by the government were heavier, and the opportunities for gain were correspondingly larger. The wealth they acquired was indeed obtained at the country's cost, while the profits of great merchants and prosperous manufacturers increased the national prosperity, but the farmers of the revenue, in their social influence and aspirations, made common cause with the rest of the rich bourgeoisie.

Neither the bank of England nor of France has exercised so large an influence on finance as the com-

pany of farmers-general. Composed of sixty members besides numerous associates, many of whom were men of great fortune, they advanced to the government sums of ready money which it could not obtain elsewhere; they purchased the right to collect most of the duties imposed by the state, and they reaped an enormous profit. The allowance to the members for their services was large, but this was an insignificant part of their gains. Turgot estimated the profits of one contract at sixty million livres, and the amounts actually realized usually exceeded all estimates.

Upon this gigantic enterprise were fastened numerous allowances for officials and favored protégés; in form they came from the profits of the contractors, but the number of persons thus interested made it easier to obtain favorable terms from the government and more difficult to overthrow the system. The *croupiers*, those to whom certain sums were secured on the farm of 1774, form a curious list, and show how extensive were the ramifications which united different interests against any financial reform under the old régime. The comptroller-general was given three hundred thousand livres as his bonus for signing the contract, and then followed those who profited in greater or less degree. On the list are the daughters of the king, the family of Mme. de Pompadour, the physician of Mme. du Barry; the nurse of the Duke of Burgundy, and a singer at the queen's concerts; a great lady like Mme. de Boufflers, and Mlle. Romans, one of the king's many obscure mistresses. The Marquis of Ximènes figures for two hundred thousand livres side by side with Bourdet, the dentist, who has one hundred and twenty thousand.

The careers of some of these farmers of revenue

furnish curious chapters of social history. The wealth which was gained from the taxpayer was usually squandered with prodigality, and few of them founded rich families. Among the best known was Bouret, who succeeded in making and spending forty million livres, and died insolvent. His pavilion at Gonesse and his château at Croix Fontaine were of a splendor surpassing the historical palaces of an ancient and opulent nobility. Another pavilion yet more magnificent was built to entertain Louis XV. when he hunted in the vicinity, and in it the happy financier was honored by the royal presence. Voltaire wrote verses for him with which to greet the king; two manuscripts found among his papers and inscribed "Le vrai bonheur" commemorated the visits he received from his sovereign and his sovereign's mistresses, and the fêtes by which these were celebrated. A man of letters, who was always a welcome guest, describes the delights of Bouret's entertainments: "All the charms of luxury, all the refinements of the most ingenious and delicate taste, were assembled by the enchanter Bouret, himself the most obliging and the most munificent of men."[1] The residence of La Poplinière at Passy was hardly less charming. He kept in his pay a company of musicians, and every night music was performed by the best orchestra of Paris; he had his private theatre, and the best actresses were always ready to act in it. Rameau lived with him, wrote his operas at his house, and played the organ in his private chapel. No bourgeois ever lived in more princely style, says a contemporary, and he had among his guests literati and composers, princes and ambassadors, and, what he liked best of all, the prettiest women in Paris.

[1] *Mém. de Marmontel*, ii. 261.

Though their prosperity was offensive to those who remembered it was gained through the abuses of financial misgovernment, their social position had changed and improved within a generation. Le Sage, in his "Turcaret," described the typical farmer-general of his time, a vulgar and purse-proud parvenu. Turcaret's successors were more agreeable men to meet; their châteaux were often beautiful as well as rich; their money was spent with good taste; they acquired some of the polish of the court from intercourse with gentlemen who were willing to enjoy their hospitality and marry their daughters; they obtained at least a certain varnish of philosophy and science, when Voltaire and Diderot and Alembert were constantly found at their tables. Their wealth secured for many of them some social recognition from the nobility; there were frequent marriages in which a needy nobleman replenished the family estates by marrying the daughter of a farmer-general, to whom the exultant father secured an enormous dowry. If the husband usually regarded such a marriage as a misalliance, and treated his wife with condescension if not with contempt, still the blood of an ancient aristocracy and of newly enriched plebeians was thus blended.

The financiers, like the nobles, extended a warm welcome to thinkers, whose teachings resulted in the overthrow of both nobility and farmers-general; and, at the salons of a class which constituted one of the worst abuses of the old régime, philosophers were listened to with delight when they declared that régime must yield to a new era of enlightenment and progress.

Many of the farmers of revenue were prominent in the literary circles of the time: Francueil, the ancestor

of George Sand and one of the early patrons of Rousseau; Helvetius, a leader among the philosophers; Beaujon, whose hermitage was one of the marvels of the time for its senseless luxury, and whose noble hospital still perpetuates his name and disposes in charity a portion of the money long ago wrung from the public; Lavoisier, the founder of modern chemistry; Reynière, a member of the academy of painting, were all connected with the farms; the salons of many of the associates were favorite resorts of those prominent in literature and science.

At the close of Louis XV.'s reign, the farmers-general were at the height of their power and influence; the tragical end of the great corporation a few years later may cause one to forget the corruption and the prodigality of its members. At the Revolution this system of collecting taxes was at once abolished, as it should have been long before, and during the reign of terror all the surviving members were tried in one batch, condemned, and sent to the scaffold together. Lavoisier was among those who perished, and if the fate of all his associates was not equally undeserved, the wiping out of an entire association in blood upon the guillotine gives a certain lurid interest to the part which the company of farmers-general played in French history.

Persons of different rank were brought together more intimately than in the past. As manners became gentler, instances were rare of the brutal violence with which the nobility had sometimes treated their inferiors. Such incidents as the caning of Voltaire by the servants of a ruffianly nobleman were not frequent as Louis's reign drew to its close. Men prominent in literature and wealthy bourgeois were admitted to

social intimacy with the nobility to an extent which was not found in any other Continental country. The German baron or the Spanish hidalgo had little more to do with those of plebeian birth in the eighteenth century than his ancestors two centuries before; they were not received at his table nor found in his salon, if by chance he had anything corresponding to a Parisian salon. We might suppose that in France more intimate relations between the aristocracy and the leaders of the third estate would have helped to break down the caste feeling, which had been far stronger than in England. It sometimes produced the reverse effect; jealousies and petty grievances were more frequent than when the lines dividing different orders were rigorously drawn. In the seventeenth century, any social relations between the aristocracy and the bourgeoisie were so uncommon that there was little opportunity for the slights and petty mortifications that are so rarely forgotten. The lackeys of a gentleman might push some shopkeeper into the mud to make room for their master, but he expected nothing else, and his grievance was more against the lackeys than the gentleman.

His descendant a century later, if he was a wealthy farmer-general, a popular poet, or a philosopher who had reached the distinction of spending a few weeks in the Bastille, might be admitted to the nobleman's salon, and meet on a footing of nominal equality persons whose ancestors, if he had lived a century before, would not have known his name; but the affability with which great nobles usually treated the popular writers, the famous philosophers, and the wealthy financiers who gathered at their receptions, did not prevent a thousand little pricks to an alert

vanity. Greater equality of education and of manners made those of inferior birth more sensitive to assumptions of superiority which no urbanity could entirely remove. In the seventeenth century, the well-to-do bourgeois had neither the education nor the manners of good society; if he was reminded of his social inferiority, he was not inclined to resent it. But the grandson of the successful shopkeeper gained fame by his writings, or supported a magnificent château and an elegant salon by his wealth; his dress was as perfect as that of the nobleman he met; his bow was as courtly, he could talk as well if not better concerning literature and art, his *bonmots* were as well turned, his compliments were as graceful; the occasional reminder that he was of low rank was all the more distasteful. He was not ready to admit an inferiority which his ancestor had not questioned; wounded in his vanity by some courteous snub or some biting word, he retired to write more fiercely against archaic privileges, and to describe more eloquently the charms of the approaching era in which there should be equality for all. Barnave tells us that, when he was a child, his mother, the wife of a respected lawyer, was turned out of her loge at the Grenoble theatre by order of the Duke of Tonnerre, the governor of the province. The bourgeois of the town resented the affront offered the wife of one of their citizens, and the future orator of the National Assembly swore that he would lift the caste to which he belonged from the state of humiliation to which it was condemned.[1]

Another actor in the Revolution has told of similar mortifications, and this time it was a woman whose pride was wounded. When Mme. Roland was a

[1] Sainte-Beuve, Barnave, *Causeries du Lundi*, ii. 25.

girl, she was offended to hear her grandmother called mademoiselle by ladies who reserved the title of madame for those of gentle birth; at Fontenay she nursed her rage while she and her mother were left to dine in a separate room instead of with other guests. "I could not persuade myself," she says, "that I was not of more importance than Mlle. d'Hannaches, whose genealogy has not enabled her to write a letter that can be read or that has common sense. . . . I shall detest these people so much that I shall not know what to do with my hatred."[1] Taine is probably right in saying we may be certain that the *amour propre* of Marat and Robespierre and Danton on many an occasion suffered from similar grievances.

While the peasant nursed a sullen irritation, on account of the feudal dues which he paid the neighboring nobleman, the prosperous bourgeois, the successful lawyer, the popular author, carried in his heart the remembrance of some slight, some jesting word, some petty affront, which it was useless to resent, but which in time would make him look on with complacency when the peasant was employed in sacking the nobleman's château. Among all the doctrines preached by the philosophers, in none were they more in earnest than in a demand for social equality, and among all the doctrines to which nobles listened with approval, there was none which they had less thought of conceding, whenever it ceased to be an agreeable paradox.

"At an English nobleman's," writes Arthur Young, describing his efforts to get information about the condition of agriculture from the Duke of Rochefoucauld, "there would have been three or four farmers

[1] *Mém. de Mme. Roland, pas.*

asked to meet me, who would have dined with the family amongst ladies of the first rank. . . . This is a thing that in the present state of manners in France would not be met with from Calais to Bayonne." [1]

As political power was lost by the aristocracy, not unnaturally they became more tenacious of less important prerogatives which were all that remained to distinguish them from the third estate. The interest shown in minute details of ceremony had long been a marked characteristic; when no other field was open for ambition, a man's mind was easily absorbed by the question whether he should take precedence of his neighbor or his neighbor should take precedence of him. Those of different ranks were now thrown together, and the upper classes were by nature inclined to insist on every petty mark of social superiority; they were ready to be supercilious, and those below them in position were very sensitive to superciliousness. The French Revolution, said Talleyrand, was born of vanity. It is certain that the distinctions established by ancient social usage rankled in the minds of many who were leaders in the Revolution.

At the very time that liberty and equal rights were favorite subjects of discussion in every salon, the advantages of birth were insisted upon to a greater extent than when a powerful feudal aristocracy yielded reluctantly to the authority of the king. I have already alluded to the fact that under Louis XV. the higher offices of the church were reserved for gentlemen of birth much more strictly than under Louis XIV. Not long after Louis XV.'s death, the famous order was issued by Ségur, requiring a certificate of nobility duly attested by the court genealogist before

[1] Young's *Travels in France*, 146.

the grade of officer in the army could be bestowed. The great majority of French officers had always been of gentle birth; there had been many opportunities of promotion for the man who relied upon his rank, and few for him who had only his services to which he could appeal; still, no such unbending rule had been laid down, and during all of the seventeenth century, a commoner by birth had a better chance for advancement in the army than under Louis XV. It was exactly the reverse of the condition that we would expect to find, when we consider the tone of society in the latter part of the century, and the apparent favor with which the aristocracy listened to arguments for the equality of all. For admission to the military school founded under Duverney's auspices, four generations of gentle blood were required; as democracy drew near, the effort to ward it off was more vigorous.[1]

The reception extended to the doctrines of the philosophers by the French aristocracy was of considerable importance. The taste for literature among the higher classes was not confined to a desire to have celebrities at their tables who could amuse guests with their *bonmots*. Walpole could have largely increased his list of noble writers among the French aristocracy of the eighteenth century. The Duke of Nivernais wrote fables and turned off fugitive verses that were not without merit. The Marquis of Mirabeau wrote on political economy. The Vicomte d'Alese published a treatise on the origin of evil. The Marquis of Ximènes wrote tragedies; they were not good, but

[1] Count Ségur, *Mém.*, i. 277, says this edict did not materially change the existing rule, and that under its exceptions a commoner had substantially as good a chance of promotion as before.

they were acted. One could continue with a long list of gentlemen of rank who did not disown literary labors. "We have abandoned," said the Prince of Hénin, "those absurd and Gothic prejudices against literature. If I had the talent, I would write a comedy to-morrow." [1] "Our nobility," wrote Grimm, who knew them well, "does not become commercial, but it is very philosophical and much given to scribbling." [2]

The occasional appearance of a duke or marquis as an author was not important, but the cordial reception given the views of radical reformers by the most influential members of society was a very weighty matter. It is true, doubtless, that many who talked of liberty and equality, who decided that in an era of illumination they must discard the religious and political beliefs of ages of darkness, regarded such modes of speech as little more than an intellectual diversion, a fashion which pleased because it was new. The nobles who declaimed on the rights of the citizen and the merits of the British constitution had no thought of renouncing any exemption or privilege; no duchess intended to relinquish her tabouret, and no peer intended to abandon his precedence.[3] A young nobleman has described to us the charm which many of his order found in the novel principles inculcated by the philosophers, and how little they appreciated the results which these would produce. "We applauded republican scenes at the theatre and philosophical addresses at the academies. We took pleasure in attacks upon an ancient organization, regarding

[1] Cited by Taine, *L'ancien régime.*

[2] *Cor. Lit.*, iii. 488.

[3] Duc de Broglie, *Secret du roi*, ii. 211.

them as contests of words which could not be dangerous to the advantages we enjoyed, and which a possession of centuries had rendered safe from overthrow. . . . It did not seem to us that these combats of words and phrases could injure our own superior position; we were proud of being Frenchmen, and still more of being Frenchmen of the eighteenth century. . . . Without regret for the past, without disquietude for the future, we walked gayly on a carpet of flowers which concealed from us the abyss." [1]

Yet the profession of such views by those who were not in the least inclined to put them in execution aided their acceptance by those who held to them in very grim earnest.

At few periods has social life been more charming. The art of entertainment had reached a high degree of development, and both men and women were well fitted to render it attractive; they wished to be amused by others: they were themselves able to amuse. Hospitality was practiced on a large scale, and the great houses stood open for guests on all days and hours. If marital affection was not so lacking as is sometimes thought, there were few who did not find the company of others more to their taste than long and tranquil hours of domestic felicity.

In society the upper classes found alike their pleasure and their occupation, and social life was brought to a degree of perfection only to be acquired by those who added untiring effort to natural fitness. To the art of social intercourse the upper classes in France devoted the energy which the mathematician bestows on his problem or the painter on his art; if the results of such endeavors were not of vast importance, they were

[1] *Mém. de Ségur*, i. 39, 132, 3.

pleasing. No business cares, no irksome reflections on the problems of existence, distracted the thoughts of those who believed that the object of life was to secure its pleasures. A gentleman was expected to be courteous, to be well bred, to be witty, and always to be agreeable; a lady must be well dressed, and appreciative, and always charming. Such were the ideals, and they were realized. Life was not a round of social duties, but of social pleasures. At their châteaux in the country and their hôtels in Paris, the wealthy and well-bred extended a hospitality that never wearied, and neglected nothing that could add to the pleasure of guests. There were few dinners where the conversation was not agreeable; there were few great salons at which any of their habitués ever passed a tiresome evening; there were private theatres in abundance, and at many of them the acting would have done little discredit to the Français. The description of life at the country seat of the Epinays would apply to many other residences equally attractive. Their château was at La Chevrette, and in it were constantly gathered a large number of people, many of whom were famous, and all of whom were agreeable. St. Lambert, Duclos, Francueil, Mme. d'Houdetot, Rousseau, and Grimm were visitors, more or less frequent. Nowhere could there be less question as to whether life was worth living: the place and the grounds were beautiful; every luxury was furnished that wealth could procure. Literature, love, and philosophy went hand in hand, and the guests walked and drove, and wined and dined, and sang and talked. Private theatricals occupied much of their attention, and one of Rousseau's early plays was first acted at La Chevrette. Mme. d'Epinay,

writes of this: "We have had a new piece to-day, and Francueil has presented the poor devil of an author. He is poor as Job, but he has enough wit and vanity for four." Other authors read their productions, and these were praised and criticised. The suppers lasted until a late hour, and the conversation was free and brilliant.

The process of social refining had long been carried on at Versailles, and this had its effect on the manners of all within its influence. No pains could be too great, if thereby an additional mark of respect was shown, or an additional smile was gained. Every morning the Duke of Richelieu, when only a lad of seven, stood at the foot of the stairway leading from the royal chapel. His only duty was to make his bow to Mme. de Maintenon, as she started for St. Cyr, but summer and winter he was never absent from his post.[1] The French aristocracy were drilled in etiquette as severely as Frederick William drilled his grenadiers, and with the same success: the Prussians became the best soldiers in Europe, and the French had the best manners.

The portraits of the age still preserve for us some reflection of a society which has passed from the earth. In the paintings of Fragonard, and Boucher, and Van Loo, we can see the elaborate dress, the tranquil countenance, the perfect breeding of those who allowed no care to mar their serenity, who asked only entertainment from their companions, and who paid in the same coin for what they received. In these portraits the children differ from their parents in little except years: the dress of the girl of six is as fitted for a fashion plate as that of the woman of thirty;

[1] *Mém. de Levis*, 29.

the boy would disdain rough sports and already lisps courteous flatteries. Nor does age leave them indifferent to an existence they found so pleasing. The grandfather still breathes a devotion which he feels no less and no more than he did at twenty-five, and the white-haired lady listens to it with no less and no more of romantic thrill than when she was eighteen. No life was ever more artificial or more charming.

One who seeks pleasure in existence is ever alert for new experiences. The philosophers of the last half of the century had something to say, and they could say it well; they were received into a society that wished to be amused, and whether or not they worked any real change in its character, they certainly changed its tone.[1] To courteous compliment or amusing persiflage, to the scandal of the court or the gossip of the theatre, succeeded discussions of social change, plans for new forms of government, dissertations on science, and debates concerning the truths of religion. "The fashion of poetical abbés," said Grimm, "is passing, now geometricians are the favorite guests at the toilettes of great dames."[2] Triflers who sought to amuse, like Bernis, were succeeded by philosophers who sought to persuade, like Alembert.

One effect this change surely had, it increased the delights of a society that was already the most agreeable in the world. There are innumerable witnesses to the interest of gatherings where all were intellectually alert, and where subjects of the highest importance were discussed from every standpoint. Morellet has told of the famous dinners at Baron Holbach's,

[1] Taine, *L'ancien régime*, 369 *et pas.*

[2] *Nouv. Lit.*, i. 125.

The guests met at two, for in those days no pressure of business abridged the time for diversion, it was often seven before they dispersed, and there was no question which did not come under discussion. It was, he says, "the most free, the most animated, and the most instructive conversation that it was ever possible to hear." Still unwearied, these athletes of talk would leave the dinner-table only to meet again at the Tuileries gardens, and there continue the debate.

In the reign of Louis XV., the authority which Versailles had exercised was gradually transferred to the salons of Paris. Amid the restrictions of court life, the freer modes of thought which were evolved during the century could find no utterance. The influence of those eminent in literature or science was great, and there were few of them who could obtain admission to the levées of the king; even Voltaire's career at Versailles was brief and troubled. In the social life of Paris there was a charm of conversation, an interest, and an excitement, which could not be found in the life of the court. One could epitomize the social changes of the reign by saying that the influence of Paris was waxing and that of Versailles was waning.[1]

This was not only true in questions of politics, or science, or religion; the judgment of the court had once been as decisive in art and literature as it was in etiquette, but this was no longer so. "The influence of the court," writes Mercier, "is no longer of importance. . . . Its judgments are no longer accepted on the merits of a book or of a play. . . . People say the members of the court have no just ideas

[1] *France under the Regency*, 561, 2.

on such subjects, and cannot form them; they have not a correct point of view." [1]

For more than quarter of a century the great Parisian salons were centres of European thought. In them, by conversation, by the friction of discussion, the doctrines were elaborated which spread over all Europe. Men might write books hard to understand, but if they were to expound their views orally, these must be put in form so clear that any one could comprehend; much of the philosophy of the time was superficial and much was erroneous, but it was never obscure.

It was not alone in the houses of fellow workers like Holbach and Helvetius, or with farmers-general like Bouret and Francueil, that the famous writers were found, but at Mme. Geoffrin's and Mme. du Deffand's, with the Duke of Choiseul and the Prince of Conti, with the Maréchale of Luxembourg and the Countess of Egmont. Nowhere did the doctrines of Voltaire and Rousseau, of Holbach and Diderot, find a more cordial reception than among the French aristocracy, who were the choicest product of the old régime, and who fell with its fall.

In examining the social conditions of any country, the relations of the sexes and the bonds of the family justly excite the most interest. In French history, perhaps in all history, erroneous notions of the morality of a nation are often formed because attention is fixed on the upper classes. The life of Versailles in the last century had its influence upon the nation and is deserving of study, but when we form our judgment of the morality of a people by that of a small class, we make a large generalization on a small basis.

[1] *Tableau de Paris*, iv. 261.

In education, in modes of life and modes of thought, a French marquis was further removed from a French peasant than an educated Englishman was from an educated German, and we cannot judge the moral condition of the French people from the marquis alone.

The lives of the peasantry were controlled by their necessities, and there is no reason to believe that in morality they were not equal to those of the same class in any part of Europe. Above them came the great body of the upper middle classes, the bourgeois, the merchants, the lawyers, all those whose condition was raised above that of the man who cultivated the soil or who worked for daily wages, but who were excluded from the society of the aristocracy by a lack of pedigree, of wealth, or of breeding. The moral tone of these great classes in France has usually been good, nor is there any reason to believe that it was worse in the last century than it is in the present. Dissipation and licentiousness have rarely been their faults, their domestic life has often been narrow, their daughters have been brought up with a rigor that tends to become excessive, the mothers have had no ideas beyond their children and their confessors; and where such modes of life prevail, the marital tie is not apt to be unduly relaxed.

A contemporary describes the severity with which the demoiselles were guarded, not only among prosperous bourgeois, but among small shopkeepers and artisans.[1] The daughters of the nobility were educated at convents, and at many of these the life was not without gayety. The daughter of the bourgeois, who was hardly allowed out of her mother's sight until

[1] *Tableau de Paris*, iii. 143.

she was married to the man whom her parents had selected, was more rigorously brought up, and usually went through life in a strict and narrow round of occupations, from which all possibility for scandal was banished.[1]

It is hard to decide how far the family tie was realized among the upper classes in the reign of Louis XV. The long period of almost sixty years witnessed changes in morals as well as in religious and political sentiments. "When I entered life," said Bernis, "it was thought ridiculous for a husband to love his wife, and vice versa. Marital constancy savored of bourgeoisie. To-day people are perhaps not more moral, but they are more decent."[2] The abbé magnified the evils he found at the beginning of his career, and somewhat understated the improvement that could be noticed before its close. That immorality was common among the upper classes, and that little concealment of it was attempted, no one would deny, but the tendency is often to exaggerate such conditions. The professional Lotharios, the Richelieus and the Lauzuns, were but a small portion of the community, and even amid the dissipation of Versailles, there were many examples of marital devotion. Families like those of the dauphin and the Duke of Luynes were models of all that could be desired by the most rigorous moralist, and there were many such, though doubtless they were in a minority. They were sufficiently numerous to express their disapprobation of the levity that was prevalent. At the theatre of the Petits Cabinets, the play of "Le Préjugé" was acted, in

[1] Instances of this are given in many contemporary memoirs. See, also, Perey's *Princesse de Ligne.*

[2] *Mém. de Bernis*, i. 98.

which the principal character is in love with his wife, but dares not disclose this because, as he says, "conjugal love has become ridiculous." But the Duke of Luynes assures us that all did not think so, and condemned the indecency of Mme. de Pompadour in appearing in such a play.[1] Probably the critics belonged to the party of the queen, but French society, even at Versailles, was not entirely composed of those who thought conjugal love ridiculous.

Doubtless, criticisms like those of Bernis, even if exaggerated, are not made unless there is some foundation for them. No one would have ventured such a remark about the Plymouth colony in 1640; life at Versailles in the generation that followed the regency was far removed from life at Edinburgh under John Knox. "Why should there be an outcry over Louis XV.'s conduct?" said Barbier. "Of twenty gentlemen at the court, fifteen keep mistresses and do not live with their wives; nothing is more common even in Paris. Is it not ridiculous to wish that the king should be in worse condition than his subjects?" [2]

It is certain that the end of the reign saw a change in these respects, and the change was for the better. In the ardent desire to improve the race which was professed by philosophers, and was fashionable in the salons, there may have been some unreality and a good deal of shallow sentimentality. No writer did more to make such sentiments popular than Rousseau, and his own life showed how easy it was to be elevated in profession and degraded in practice.

But praising the virtues has its effect, even when the praise is somewhat insincere. The gentlemen and

[1] *Mém. de Luynes*, x. 408.

[2] *Journal de Barbier*, December, 1750.

ladies who were anxious to reform the world sometimes began by attempts at reforming themselves; a man like Richelieu could not have been the hero at the end of the reign that he was at the beginning. Even the irregular unions, which were so frequent and were viewed by society with complacency, not to say approval, were far removed from the volatile passions of the regency, and they are among the curious phases of social life in the last century. The relations of this kind among those prominent in society and literature are the most familiar to us, and furnish the best examples of the strange compound of real feeling and unreal pretense which went side by side.

The record of Mme. d'Epinay's life, which she has left for the edification of posterity, is typical of the age. Her husband was the ideal spendthrift farmer-general; a man who, as Diderot said, wasted two millions without ever saying a good thing or doing a good act. If the love of his wife was soon dispelled, no one could wonder and few would censure. A man who wasted his money and deserted his wife was in no position to criticise her conduct closely.

Mme. d'Epinay, who was one of the most charming women of a charming age, surrounded herself with a society of her own, and the husband and wife, though with no open breach, led their separate lives, making little claim on each other. Her career was not one that could be justified, but her husband regarded this as no concern of his. "All that I have a right to demand of my wife," said M. d'Houdetot, "is decorum in her conduct." A requirement as modest as this was sufficient, when both parties desired for themselves, and allowed to each other, entire liberty of action.

Mme. d'Epinay contracted a friendship for Grimm, which endured for many years; which withstood age, and sickness, and scanty means; which was as openly acknowledged as any marriage, and was viewed with as much respect. For unions blessed by the church were substituted unions made respectable by constancy and devotion, and it must be said that at this period, such companionships were often seen at their best. As they took the place of marriage, they were held to be entitled to the same regard. "Can you conceive," said a woman of the time and to the manner bred, "that there are women base enough to wish to take from another her lover?" "Life here," wrote Mlle. d'Ette, describing existence at La Chevrette, "is like a romance. They are a troupe of lovers." If it was a romance, if the troupe of lovers felt themselves raised above conventionalities and conventional laws, at least they were far removed from the lovers whom Boccaccio described, or from those who took part in the fêtes of the Palais Royal.

Another instance of a similar companionship was that of President Hénault and Mme. du Deffand. The president was a judge of the Parliament, a member of the Academy, one of the luminaries in the famous salons of the day; he wrote some clever verses, some dull tragedies, and a history which met with a prodigious success; he was equally popular at court and among the literati. Mme. du Deffand had a more stormy career: she was one of the regent's mistresses, and had been one of the guests at the suppers of the Palais Royal; she had married a marquis, from whom she was speedily separated. So varied a career did not prevent her attaining a recognized position in Parisian society, and at her house were found the most famous literary men of France.

After many vicissitudes, Mme. du Deffand and President Hénault formed a union, which was terminated only by death. At her salon the president had his recognized position, something more than guest, and something less than master. Even the most rigorous moralists made no complaint. Hénault was always a favorite of Marie Leszczynski, whose punctilious piety refused any concessions to the fashionable irreligion of the day. Mme. du Deffand was the life-long friend of the Duchess of Choiseul, one of the purest and most devout, as well as one of the most charming of women.

The relations between Voltaire and Mme. du Châtelet are still more familiar, and the list of such irregular unions among those prominent in the latter half of the century would be a long one. They were not in conformity with the usages of well-ordered society, but they were far removed from the license of the regency, or the libertinage which was sometimes found underneath the decorum of the age of Louis XIV. When marriages were based on considerations of family and fortune, mutual indifference soon ripened into aversion, and it was not strange that men and women should sometimes form alliances for themselves based on affection and sympathy. Saint Lambert proclaimed his views on the sublime nature of love at the dinner-table of Mlle. Quinault, and all the guests were so carried away by enthusiasm that for almost quarter of an hour their applause stopped further conversation.[1] In this there may have been much that was factitious and unreal, but even misplaced enthusiasm is better than indifference.

Of the changes in thought which the reign of Louis

[1] *Mém. de Mme. d'Epinay.*

XV. witnessed, the decline in religious belief was the most important, and a refusal to acknowledge the authority of the church was naturally followed by a refusal to accept social and political beliefs which had once been received with no more question. France had never been so free from religious incredulity as Spain; even in the days when Louis XIV. set an edifying example of obedience to the commands of the church, and professions of piety were in most favor, there were complaints that unbelief was rife. "There is not a young man who does not wish to be an atheist," wrote the Princess Palatine. "At Paris, among clergy or laity, I do not believe there are a hundred persons who hold the true faith."

These statements were greatly exaggerated, but they would not have been made if there was no foundation for them. In the licentious epoch of the regency, when immorality was the fashion as devotion had been under Louis XIV., the revelers of the Palais Royal professed to be freethinkers, if only to show that they did not belong to the party of the old court.

Such symptoms are not very important; the roués who jested about religion at the suppers of the Palais Royal did not exercise any strong influence on public thought; the community regarded their conduct as scandalous, and was not likely to be affected by their views. The decline in religious belief was due to graver causes than the hypocrisy of courtiers under Louis XIV., or the indecency of courtiers under the regency. The position which the church assumed during the century had more to do with lessening its influence than the jests of profligates or the sneers of men of fashion.

The policy it pursued has been told in the history of the period, — the narrowness of its teachings, its want of zeal in charitable work, its energy in persecution, its resolve to make the acceptance of the Unigenitus the criterion of saving faith. By its own conduct the church in France furnished arguments for those who attacked it, and weakened the zeal of many who remained its nominal adherents.

In no great body had sincere belief been more universal than among the Huguenots; skeptics were almost as rare among the followers of Coligni as among the Pilgrims on the Mayflower. Earnest faith and practical piety became no weaker among the French Protestants when their sect had lost its political importance; when political privileges were again granted them by Louis XVI., their standard of conduct and belief was as high as when they were warring under Coligni. Persecution had indeed driven from their ranks any who were weak in the faith, but even without this purifying influence we can safely assume that the French Huguenots, had their rights been respected during the eighteenth century, might have exercised a conservative influence of much importance; but they were under the ban of the law, they were persecuted and downtrodden; instead of their conduct furnishing an example of the good that Christianity could accomplish, the persecution they suffered was an instance of the evil the church could work.

Before the close of Louis XV.'s reign, active persecution had indeed ceased. Though the government would not expunge from the statute-books the penalties imposed upon Huguenots for the profession of their faith, the edicts were allowed to fall into disuse.

Occasionally, some official was disturbed because their provisions were violated in a manner he thought too public. In 1768, the Protestants in Languedoc began to use chairs and benches in the religious assemblies that were still held in the open air, and were still forbidden by law. Saint Florentin was appealed to by some zealous Catholics, who despaired indeed of preventing the Protestant gatherings, but insisted that their attendants should remain standing during services which often lasted four hours. The minister directed the matter to be investigated, but the Huguenots substituted stones for chairs, and his religious zeal was quieted.[1] Such were the relics of the persecution by which it was once believed that all Frenchmen could be driven into the one church.

Not only the narrowness of the dogmas upon which the church insisted and the persecutions it countenanced were repellent to men of liberal thought, but the worldly life of many of the higher ecclesiastics, their wealth, of which so large a portion was diverted to other than religious uses, their unwillingness to share in the support of the state, all helped to diminish the respect in which the clergy were held, and when the teachers were in ill repute, their teachings were no longer regarded with the veneration of the past.

The overthrow of the Jesuits was welcomed as a triumph by the philosophical school, and it gave them a certain prestige of victory that was of considerable value. The number was small of those who thought the truth was to be found with the expounders of new things, instead of in the dogmas they had once acknowledged, who made any serious examination of the questions involved, or could give any better reason

[1] Letters cited by Coquerel, *Eglises du désert*, ii. 296.

for disbelieving Christianity than they had been able to give for believing it; formerly they had accepted what one class of men said was true, and now they accepted what another class of men said was true. But the adherents who join a cause because it seems to be winning are numerous and important, and to such men the expulsion of the Jesuits appeared to be a defeat for the church, a sign that the ancient institution could not withstand the attacks of its enemies. The overthrow of the order was indeed the act of the Parliament, but the position of the defenders of Catholic faith had already been weakened by the assaults of freethinkers; it was because their doctrines were discredited that the government left them undefended when the courts sought their ruin.

As the influence of the philosophical school increased, there was a corresponding increase in religious infidelity. Those who denied the truths of the Christian religion were soon succeeded by those who denied the existence of a Supreme Being, and by whom Voltaire was regarded as a deist and a bigot. "I think that I have never met an atheist," said Hume, when dining at Baron Holbach's. "You are sitting at table with seventeen of them," replied his host.

Not only among writers and savants, but among the aristocracy and the upper middle classes, unbelief prevailed to a larger extent than ever before. At a dinner given by an influential nobleman or a wealthy bourgeois, the chances were that the majority of those present had discarded any faith in Christianity. Even among the ecclesiastics who gathered at the table of some bishop or fashionable abbé, the proportion was considerable of those who had no belief in the creed they professed. "The French," wrote Walpole in

1765, "have no time to laugh. There is God and the king to be pulled down first, and men and women, one and all, are devoutly employed in the demolition." Incredulity, by the close of Louis XV.'s reign, was very nearly as widespread as at the outbreak of the Revolution.

The French stage was so important a feature in the social life of the period that it deserves some notice, and in an era of change it did not escape modification. Improvement was found rather in the finish of acting than in dramatic creation; of the innumerable plays produced in Louis XV.'s reign, few have held their position on the stage. The masterpieces of Molière and Racine and Corneille were not equaled in the next century; even the works of Voltaire fail to interest subsequent generations, and "Zaïre" and "Mahomet" are no longer seen at the Comédie Française. If the era of great productions was past, in their representation, as well as in the influence exerted by the drama, the theatre of Louis XV. was far in advance of the performances at the Petit Bourbon and the Hôtel Bourgogne in the seventeenth century.

Under Louis XIV., the theatre began to assume the form of modern times, but the representations were still very imperfect; though its popularity far exceeded that which it had attained in the past, it filled no such place in the life of the people, nor did it exercise any such influence as in the following century. In Louis XV.'s reign, it became not only a form of amusement, but a political organ of considerable importance. The representations of Beaumarchais's plays constitute a noteworthy chapter in the political history of the time. Voltaire found in the stage abundant opportunities for the propagation of his

views, and the government censure often discovered occasions for its interference. The representations of a play called "The Honest Criminal" were forbidden because it held out to popular sympathy a Protestant punished for attendance at the religious assemblies of his creed. Such a performance, said the authorities, inculcated a spirit of independence and revolt; but certainly there were many pieces that escaped the vigilance of the censor, from which the public drew similar lessons.

In like manner the representation of "Tancred" was stopped, because it furnished an opportunity to express popular sympathy with Marshal Broglie, but ordinarily the censorship of the stage was exercised irregularly and inefficiently. If any play was to be suppressed, the "Marriage of Figaro" should have been denied public representation, but after some ineffectual opposition, it was allowed to do its part in hastening the overthrow of the old régime. Count Ségur tells of the applause of republican sentiments on the stage, and of the many opportunities which the young nobility found to express their approval of the ideas that were to result in the overthrow of their order.

The increased influence of the drama was largely due to the fact that the stage was made more attractive; in the accessories, the dress and the scenery, as well as in the acting, there were great advances. In the early part of the reign, the demand for truth in scenic representation and the taste for local color on the stage were yet unknown. Alexander still appeared in the wig, the breeches, and the silk stockings of a nobleman of Versailles. Andromache's hair was powdered, and she wore a large panier; the lovelorn shepherdess had white kid gloves, and concealed her

emotions with her fan. Few were disturbed by such incongruities, and it might be said that if classical heroes and heroines in French plays appeared in dresses that were familiar at Versailles and unknown in Greece and Rome, the sentiments put in their mouths would have seemed quite as strange to the personages represented as the clothes put on their backs. Whether the hero was called a Persian king or a Greek demigod, his thoughts and his passions were those of a French courtier. When Theseus was arrayed as a marshal, and Electra had patches on her face, it did not seem curious that they should have the ideas as well as the dress of French people of the eighteenth century. Andrieux speaks of seeing a savage appear on the stage with his hair powdered; if he talked like Rousseau instead of a Choctaw chief, it was in keeping.

It was about 1755, at a time when existing social systems were denounced by many as false and artificial, that the first serious effort was made for greater truth in dramatic art, and the credit of this endeavor is chiefly to be attributed to Clairon and Lekain, the famous artists of the Français.

Adrienne Lecouvreur had indeed initiated the reform, and when she acted the part of a peasant, refused to dress as a queen. Her untimely death prevented her example from gaining many imitators, but now a desire that reality should replace formalities affected the stage as well as society. When Lekain appeared in the rôle of Cinna dressed as a Roman and not as a gentleman in waiting on Louis XV., when Clairon appeared as Roxane with bare arms and no panier, it seemed a revolution to the habitués of the theatre. It was not a change of vast importance, but

the feeling which demanded that Ulysses should dress as Ulysses and not as Marshal Saxe was allied to that which, a generation later, found utterance in the romantic school in literature, and refused to be bound by traditions that had long been regarded as too sacred to question. It was in Voltaire's tragedy of the "Orphelin de la Chine" that the actresses first appeared without hoops and farthingales. The author devoted his percentage of the receipts to the purchase of dresses which should suggest Pekin rather than Paris, and the experiment was successful.[1]

The endeavor to give a more perfect rendering led to other reforms. One abuse that was very disagreeable to the audience was also very difficult to correct, for it rested upon what was regarded as a vested right of an influential minority to amuse themselves without regard for the unprivileged majority. On the stage at the Français, as at other theatres, were placed rows of benches that were filled by gentlemen of fashion. The room thus occupied rendered any changes of scenery difficult, and greatly embarrassed the actors; as they came on the stage, they had to make their way through a crowd of courtiers dressed in the latest mode of the time, which did not help the illusion of the play; the king had to whisper instructions to his confidant, the lover to breathe asides to his mistress in the midst of two hundred gentlemen, chatting, criticising, and taking snuff. Sometimes even more incongruous scenes were witnessed. The Marquis of Sablé took his place on the stage one night, having dined well with some friends; as an actor recited some verses that the marquis did not find to his taste,

[1] Grimm, September, 1755; *Mém. de Ségur*, 139; *Journal de Collé*, ii. 33, *et pas.*

he showed his displeasure by beating the unlucky playwright on the spot.[1] Such abuses had been allowed in the days of Molière and Racine, but actors and audiences were resolved that the effect of a drama should no longer be spoiled to suit the caprice of a few. Those who claimed their right to seats upon the stage struggled against the reform, but public opinion supported the actors in their efforts to get rid of them, and in 1759 this nuisance was abated.

As theatres became more attractive, their receipts naturally increased. The first of Racine's dramas was played before a house from which the box-office received three hundred and seventy livres; two centuries later, thirty times that amount is often received at the Français at a representation of one of Racine's works. When fourteen hundred livres were taken in at a representation of Molière's "Misanthrope," this was deemed phenomenally large at the time, though it was said that two thousand livres were received at the first representation of "Le Malade Imaginaire."

In the early part of the eighteenth century, the receipts were often six or seven hundred francs, and sometimes as low as two hundred. When Le Sage's play of "Turcaret" had its great success, the receipts ranged from five hundred to two thousand three hundred francs. At one performance at the Français in 1713, there were almost fourteen hundred spectators, but this was unusual, and, moreover, the theatre had a monopoly of the representation of French plays. Theatre-lovers had no alternative but to go there or stay at home.

Fifty years later, the audiences were larger, and the

[1] "Nos prés, nos champs, seront sablés," was the offending line.

income of the theatre had increased in a still larger ratio. The prices of admission were still moderate, but they were higher than a century before. Seats in the boxes in the seventeenth century cost about three livres, and for fifteen sous one could stand in the parterre and see Molière act his own masterpieces. One hundred years later, prices in the parterre had doubled, though thirty cents seems to us a moderate price of admission at the Français. If the price was low, the accommodation was poor, for no seats were furnished those who patronized the pit. This was tiresome, even if the acting was good, and the moving of those wearied by long standing made a perpetual commotion in the theatre. In the pit, however, were found the most critical members of the audience, and those who expressed their sentiments most freely. The success or failure of a play was usually decided by the six hundred or more spectators who were willing to stand for two or three hours, while considering its merits. The professional claque of the French theatres was not yet an institution, but the theory was not unknown. Voltaire took care that at the first representation of his plays tickets should find their way into hands that could applaud loudly, and authors whose letters have not been preserved probably took equal pains.[1]

With the increased popularity of the stage, those who made it attractive obtained a somewhat improved social status; if the actors of the Français were still regarded as outside the social pale, they were no longer treated as a band of strolling vagrants. In the general lowering of social barriers the actors benefited; their position was better than it had been under Louis XIV. It has become a tradition that Molière's

[1] *Correspondance de Voltaire, pas.*

election to the Academy was seriously considered, but such a statement would never have been made in his lifetime. In Louis XIV.'s reign, no one thought of an actor as a possible member of the Academy; the choice of a poetical lackey or a learned blacksmith would not have been more at variance with the traditions of the body and the social prejudices of the period.

Actors were not found in the Academy in the days of Voltaire, but many of those who gained distinction on the stage also obtained positions of social brilliancy and influence. The salon of Mlle. Quinault, who began her career at the Français, was one of the famous salons of Paris where gathered leaders in literature and fashion. Less identified with literary coteries, the salon of Mlle. Guimard was even better known. She gave suppers on three evenings of each week: one was attended by gentlemen of fashion and of the court; at the second, the gathering of authors and savants rivaled that with Mme. Geoffrin; while at the third, which probably gave most pleasure to the hostess, she had her fellow artists and their friends, and the merriment was usually riotous.[1]

If the actors secured for themselves a certain social recognition, the sanction of religion was still denied them. It is strange that the French church should have persistently condemned a calling which began by the performance of religious scenes and moralities. There was no reason why religion should condemn those who furnished amusement to men spending an evening at a theatre, and find no fault with those who furnished facilities for spending an evening talking in a café; of the two, the former might seem the more

[1] Bachaumont, January, 1768.

profitable way of occupying the time. The actors said they could follow their calling in Rome without incurring papal condemnation, but at Paris the stage was treated with the same unbending rigor as Jansenism; the man who appeared on the boards was refused the offices of the church as strictly as the man who did not accept the Unigenitus. In 1761, a lawyer published a book in which he argued that comedians should not be excommunicated. He shocked the prejudices of his own order as well as of the church; the Parliament of Paris ordered his book to be burned by the hangman, and his name to be stricken from the roll of advocates.[1]

As the players by following their profession were living in disobedience to the precepts of religion, they were denied the benefits of its sacraments, and the church refused to celebrate their marriages. This prohibition was often evaded by devices at which officials winked, and upon which complaisant priests closed their eyes. The persons about to marry declared that they had abandoned an impious calling, and thereupon an accommodating priest pronounced the benediction of the church. No sooner had their marriage been solemnized than the officers of the government ordered them to resume their duties at the theatre; the command of the king released them from their promise, and they returned to the Français. This means of evading the rules of the church was checked by Beaumont, the Archbishop of Paris, who was so persistent in his efforts to prevent dying Jansenists from receiving

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, vii. 363–7. The advocate obtained a snug government appointment for consolation, which he probably owed to the influence of Clairon. *Histoire des ouvrages pour et contre le théâtre*, 1771.

the sacraments. With equal zeal for the cause of religion, he ordered his clergy to solemnize no marriages of actors unless the gentlemen of the king's chamber, in whose charge were all matters of the stage, would pledge their honor that the newly married actors should not be ordered to resume their former evil occupation. By this means the archbishop succeeded in compelling many who wished to marry to live in a state of concubinage; as the actors were forbidden legal wedlock, they dispensed with the institution. The law sought to prevent actors and Protestants from incurring the obligations of matrimony, and this condition of things the artists at the Français perhaps found less distressing than did their Huguenot fellow sufferers.

The members of the Comédie Française were more persistent in their efforts to obtain the rights of citizenship, which were also denied them on account of their profession. In 1766, they presented a request for the privileges enjoyed by other Frenchmen, and a secretary of state was willing to act as their spokesman. His appeal was unsuccessful. Louis XV. was rigorous against those under the ban of the church. It was useless to plead for them, he said; they should have no more rights in his reign than in his predecessor's. But it was discovered that an edict of Louis XIII. had conferred upon the troupe not only the title of the king's comedians, but also that of his *valets de chambre;* as this was still in force, it was decided that they were entitled to civil rights, not as comedians but as valets.[1]

If the actors had trouble in obtaining the sacraments of the church, they found some compensation

[1] Bachaumont, iii. 12, 17, 19, etc.

in the attention they received from the community; the city of Paris was often in a condition of agitation over the relations of the government and the theatre. Among the noted artists of the Français was the famous Mlle. Clairon; she was as capricious as talented, and was ready to assume the rôle of a martyr on behalf of the dignity of her art. The commotions which she aroused not only excited Paris, but disturbed the tranquillity of ministers of state. Complaining of some grievance imposed upon members of her profession, she refused to resume her place at the Français, and as a punishment for contumacy she was sent to prison at Fort L'Evèque. Her imprisonment was a triumph; she was a Parisian Wilkes, and with her, as with the English agitator, the sentence imposed by the law increased her popularity. The rebellious French actress held crowded receptions in her prison; the road to Fort L'Evèque was filled with the carriages of great personages of the day on their way to visit the heroine and assure her of their sympathy. She gave a series of dinners and suppers, served with great splendor and patronized by illustrious guests. "This is a matter of large importance," wrote Saint Florentin, one of the secretaries of state, when discussing the best policy to pursue with the heroine who was suffering for the rights of the stage. "For a long time no question has so much agitated the court." [1]

The actors who were so anxious to obtain their own rights were not equally solicitous for the rights of others, and the lot of a playwright was rendered hard by the regulations on which those who acted his play strenuously insisted. By the law in force, the writer

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, 1764.

of a five-act play, performed at the Français, was entitled to nineteen per cent. of the net receipts; but by a modification upon which the actors insisted, if the receipts on any two nights in the winter fell below twelve hundred livres, or below six hundred livres in the summer, from that time the play became their property, and the author could demand no more for his copyright. At first it was required that the receipts should fall below the minimum on two successive nights, but the actors changed regulations to suit their caprice, and they presently announced that if this occurred twice, though not on successive evenings, the play, in their own phrase, must "fall in the rules," and be acted in the future for the sole benefit of the theatre.

Twofold abuses grew out of this system; the company fixed the net profits according to their own views, declining to render any account, and it was much for their interest to have representations where, from any fortuitous or unfortunate circumstances, the receipts fell below the stipulated minimum. Few writers were in position to wrangle over terms with this body. The difficulties in having a play accepted and acted at the Français were always great, and no one was inclined to irritate the actors by a strenuous insistence on disputed rights; the honor of seeing one's work represented at the theatre of Molière was some compensation for receiving small profits from a popular piece.

The members of the Français, like the judges of Maupeou's Parliament, were unlucky enough to meet at last an opponent who was ready to battle for his rights, and who, from his financial position and the popularity of his plays, could meet the society of the Comédie Française on equal terms. It was a little

later in the century when Beaumarchais took up his cudgels in behalf of his brother writers, and in this he was actuated more by a zeal for what was just, than by a desire to get more for himself.

The comedians declined to furnish the author of the "Barber of Seville" with any detailed statement of the receipts at the representations of his play, and instead of that tendered him four thousand five hundred livres for his percentage on thirty-two performances. It was impossible, they said, for them to keep or make out exact accounts, and they must guess at them as best they could. With the utmost good humor, but with equal firmness, Beaumarchais insisted on statements from which it should appear whether the sum offered was more or less than his due; his friends of the Français, he said, were more versed in the arts of pleasing than skilled in the exact sciences; naturally they apprehended the toils of preparing exact statements, but they would not find it difficult to become bookkeepers as well as artists.[1]

These suggestions were not relished, and the comedians in high dudgeon refused to yield any privileges which had the sanction of usage, if not of justice. The playwriters, with much timidity, gathered under Beaumarchais's leadership to consult as to their rights, and finally declared that until these were respected they would write no more plays. It was, said Diderot, who declined to join, an insurrection of the writers. It was less successful than the American insurrection, to which he likened it. The actors were an influential body, and the actresses were still more influential. Representatives of government like the dukes of

[1] An account of this controversy is given in *Œuvres de Beaumarchais*. See, also, Loménie's *Beaumarchais*.

Richelieu and Duras were not inclined to interfere with usages, without which the charming actresses of the Français declared they could hardly earn enough to pay for their clothes, in favor of writers, many of whom were giving constant offense by the freedom of their criticisms. The regulations on which the government finally decided left the writers in worse plight than before; they had not sufficient resolution to persist in their refusal to write more plays, and thus matters went on.

Not until the Revolution were the privileges of the actors swept away, with so many other privileges of greater importance. Beaumarchais had the satisfaction of seeing the law declare that a man's play could only be performed with his consent, and the actors could no longer confiscate his property, or pay for it according to their own views.

Under the new regulations, authors had little trouble in obtaining their rights, substantially as they still exist. One twelfth of the gross receipts are secured to them, without deduction except for the percentage, which in this century, as in the last, is reserved for the poor from the proceeds of places of amusement.[1]

Some of Beaumarchais's contemporaries accused him of degrading literature by his zeal to secure for it pecuniary compensation. For fifty years the copyright of French writers from the French stage has exceeded a million francs annually; during the same time in the last century it was probably not one twentieth of that sum, yet the dramas and comedies of the nineteenth century are surely not inferior to those written under Louis XV.

[1] This provision applies to plays having five acts. For shorter pieces the percentage is less.

An incident occurring earlier in the century shows how the regulations of the church sometimes shocked the feelings of the community. Among the artists of the Français, Adrienne Lecouvreur was foremost. Not only had she extraordinary talent as a tragedienne, but she had shown her ability to improve on the traditions she found; she banished the monotonous recitation which was common, and insisted on more simple and more natural modes of speech; in dress, as well as declamation, she was strenuous for a closer adherence to life. Alike on the stage and in private life, Adrienne obtained for herself a position which had not been accorded to her predecessors. Not only was her salon patronized by celebrities like Voltaire and Saxe, but there duchesses of unquestionable social standing were willing to be seen; she occupied a position as the favorite of the public and the favorite of society, such as had not before been held by any French actress.

In March, 1730, though already ill, she insisted on performing a fatiguing rôle at the theatre. She acted with her usual fire, but she left the stage to die four days afterwards. The Parisian public was shocked to hear that the famous actress, still a young woman, and at the height of her reputation, had suddenly died, and the interest was increased by vague rumors that her death was caused by poison, administered by a rival beauty of exalted rank, who envied her the affection of Maurice de Saxe.[1] Whatever position Adrienne had gained for herself, by the laws of the church she was regarded as a person who practiced a scandalous and impious profession, and who, as plainly

[1] This report, though believed by many, rests on no foundation.

reprobate, could not be allowed to rest in consecrated ground. Such a prohibition no longer represented any real conviction; there were few, even of sincere believers, who thought actors worse than other people, or who supposed that the cause of religion was subserved by refusing to bury an actor any more than a butcher or a baker. The barbarous provisions which refused Christian burial to actors were usually overlooked by judicious priests, but the precepts of bigotry are sure to find some one ready to enforce them. The friends of Adrienne applied to the curé of Saint Sulpice, and he decided that the ashes of the great actress could not receive Christian burial. They then appealed to Fleury, but the cardinal said he would not overrule the Archbishop of Paris, and that dignitary confirmed the decision of the curé. Adrienne must be buried by night, said the lieutenant of police, and with the least scandal possible. In the darkness of night, therefore, the remains of a woman who had elevated the stage, and given pleasure to thousands, were put in a cab under the charge of two porters and one faithful friend, and carried to a deserted stone-yard in the Faubourg Saint Germain; there at last they found rest.

Such an incident in Paris, almost in the middle of the eighteenth century, revolted public feeling; it was one of the innumerable mistakes by which the clergy made easy the way for the philosopher. Voltaire reproached the bigotry and barbarity of such conduct, and, as so often in his life, the great poet gave utterance to the sentiments of the public.[1]

The improvement in operatic performances in Paris

[1] For Adrienne Lecouvreur, see *Works of Voltaire, pas. Lettres de Mlle. Aissé; Lettres de Mme. du Châtelet.*

was hardly less marked than the development of the theatre. It is important only as an illustration of the increase in wealth and the change in forms of social amusement. With a growing desire for public entertainment, and a larger amount to expend in its satisfaction, the opera was represented in a manner that had been impossible before. Instead of the occasional patronage of the king or a prince, it could now rely upon the support of a large number of people, rich enough to pay for their amusement, and sufficiently educated in such matters to demand that its quality should be of the best.

Increased patronage did not indeed make the opera self-sustaining; it seems inevitable that performances of that nature should be conducted at a loss, even though the clientele is numerous and wealthy. After the war of the Austrian Succession, the receipts of the Paris opera house were from three hundred and fifty thousand to four hundred thousand livres annually; a few years later, they exceeded five hundred thousand. They are now three millions, or, allowing for the change in money values, about three times as large. In proportion to the population and wealth of the city, the receipts were larger then than now.

They were, however, less than the expenses, and the government was constantly required to contribute to the support of this form of amusement.[1] Interest in the performances at this period was augmented by the long and bitter contest over the operas which should be presented. For many years prior to 1750, the music produced was almost entirely of the French school, and Rameau reigned supreme. Whatever might be said as to the merits or demerits of his

[1] *Mém. de Marmontel*, iii. 159.

works, the condition of the opera was far from prosperous; even the actors had trouble in getting their pay, and the house was declared by Parisians to be the shabbiest in Europe.[1]

In 1750, during this period of musical decadence, a troupe of Italians appeared at the Royal Academy and produced Italian operas, and the connoisseurs proclaimed the superior merits of their performances. At once a battle raged, which, in fashionable circles at least, caused political struggles to be forgotten. The Parliament was exiled to Pontoise, but Grimm tells us the conflict between the king and the judges did not receive one twentieth part of the attention which was given to the war of the musicians. Those attached to the court maintained the superiority of French music, while their opponents, inferior in rank, but comprising among them most of the critics, extolled the Italian operas as far superior to the dull, commonplace, and wearisome productions of French art. The opposing forces gathered in different parts of the opera house, near the respective loges of the monarchs, and the factions were therefore known as the corner of the king and the corner of the queen. Grimm was first brought into notice as an advocate of the politics of the queen's corner, and he declared in a pamphlet that if the French people neglected its last opportunity, and closed its ears to the music of Pergolese, it would be given over to final impenitence, and the opera house would be turned into a tennis court. His squib had a prodigious success, and three editions were exhausted in less than a month. On the whole, victory remained with the advocates of

[1] *Journal de Barbier*, iv. 389.

Italian music, and whether from the superior merit of the productions, or from the larger amount of money that was now expended, the opera at Paris became the best in Europe.

The contest between the rival schools continued during the century, and forms an interesting chapter in the history of musical art. The world of Paris, wrote Mercier a little later, was divided into Gluckists, Lullists, and Ramists, as formerly into Jansenists and Molenists.[1] In Rameau were embodied the traditions of the French school, while the advocates of the older Italian music declared that Lulli was still unsurpassed. But the operas of Gluck triumphed over all opposition; his success was as complete as that of Wagner a century later, and a certain parallel can be drawn between the musical theories advocated by the two great German composers.

The singers who appeared at the opera house possessed one inestimable advantage, — they were exempt from the excommunication which the church imposed upon the actress who amused the public at the Français. Among the anomalies of the period, none is more curious than the distinction by which the actress who represented Phèdre or Athalie at the Français was condemned by religion, while her rival who sang the rôle of Iphigénie at the opera was still within the pale of the church. A privilege which secured spiritual benefits was rare, even in an age of privilege. When the church forgave the art, it was not particular about the life. Mlle. Camille, one of the stars of the Italian comedy, died at twenty, as the result of a career of dissipation, and in the arms of the wealthy

[1] *Tableau de Paris*, vi. 245.

lover who had defrayed the splendor in which she lived; but the priest administered the communion denied to her sisters of the Français, and she was buried in the odor of sanctity in the parish church.[1]

[1] Bachaumont, July, 1768.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE INFLUENCE OF LITERATURE.

I SHALL attempt no review of the literature of Louis XV.'s reign, except in so far as it affected political development. To an unusual degree, indeed, the literature of the period was devoted to the discussion of questions of practical interest. Amid the multifarious activity of the time, it is curious how few books were published, purely literary in their character, that had any permanent value. There were no great poets like Racine or Corneille, there was no great comic writer like Molière, no great essayist like Montaigne, no great orator like Bossuet. Of all the poetry written during the sixty years of Louis XV.'s reign, few pages are now read by any one except professional scholars; almost the only plays that have kept their place on the stage are those of Beaumarchais, which belong to this period, though they appeared later, and they were essentially political in their character. If Voltaire were only remembered by his tragedies and his epics, his fame would be dim. Of the novels written, many were vapid, and many were prurient, and the most of them were both; they never edified, and they have long ceased to amuse. The great writers dealt with religion, with politics, and with society, and, with few exceptions, their mission was to attack what had long been accepted as true belief, wise government, and properly regulated social relations.

In some respects, it seems erroneous to class the Physiocrats among the writers who prepared the way for the Revolution. In their political doctrines they were far from advocating a more popular government than that under which the French then lived; their ideal was an absolute ruler, who should be benevolent and well imbued with physiocratic principles. When he had adopted the views required for the happiness of his subjects, he needed no advisers, no unwieldy and probably ill-informed legislative body. "Let the sovereign authority," said Quesnay, "be single, superior to the individual members of society, and to all the unjust enterprises of private interests." There was nothing revolutionary in such maxims. The physiocrat writers never wearied of describing the perfection of the Chinese government and the happiness of the Chinese people. Of the real condition of China they knew less than of the real condition of the Friendly Islands, but they described that country as they imagined it, — a happy land where political honor was the reward of literary attainments, and where the people were ruled by an absolute monarch, who each year followed the plow to show the honor in which he held the pursuit of agriculture.

Yet the Physiocrats, like many other writers and talkers of the time, helped to prepare the way for results which they would have viewed with grave concern if they could have foreseen them. The existing government of France was a system of privileges, commercial as well as political: privileges to the guild which could exclude rivals from its craft, and to manufacturers who could prevent others from making better goods, as well as to nobles who escaped payment of taxes, and to seigneurs who farmed their

feudal rights. The writers of the new school of political economy demanded commercial liberty and the overthrow of moneyed monopolies; it was only a step further to demand the overthrow of political monopolies, to do away with princes and hereditary rights. The impulse which led a nation to break with its commercial past soon prepared it to break with its political past; the Encyclopædia which contained Quesnay's theories on free traffic in grain had other speculations, equally new and more important, as to the nature of government and the rights of the people.

The father of the Physiocrat school was a man whose active intellect involved him in many errors, but he possessed an observing mind, and the power to draw new lessons from familiar facts. It was not among the attendants of Mme. de Pompadour that one would look for a bold political innovator, but while the favorite in her apartments at Versailles bestowed her smiles on farmers-general, and profited by the abuses from which they grew rich, her physician in the entresol above was preparing treatises to prove the necessity of their abolition. Quesnay was a doctor who, it is said, attracted the favorite's attention by his discreet conduct in treating a lady, and concealing from the public that his patient was afflicted with so disagreeable a disease as epilepsy. He became physician of the court, and gave special heed to the health of Mme. de Pompadour, and it speaks well for his discretion that he succeeded in holding this position with the good will of every one with whom he was thrown. Only one charge was brought against him, — he was a relentless proselyte; he was wont to draw his victims to one side, and seek long and earnestly to inculcate in their minds the new

discoveries he had made, which, if they could be accepted, would render France the most prosperous of kingdoms, would procure for the peasant happiness in his cottage, for the king abundance in his treasury, and for the philosopher satisfaction in his contemplations. Though the doctor was ardent in the oral exposition of his views, he showed the prudence of his nature when it came to publishing political treatises; much as he desired the happiness of France, he had no wish to spend a few years in the Bastille in order to secure it.

He was fortunate in finding among his early disciples a man whose temperament was always at the boiling point, and whom no fear ever kept from expressing his views. The Marquis of Mirabeau, the friend of men, — to give him the name by which he was best known, — had a character as unequal and as turbulent as that of his still more famous son, and he possessed an active and powerful though most ill-regulated intellect. In 1756, the marquis had not become involved in the quarrels with his wife and son, which later made him known as the most resolute litigant in France. He first attracted the attention of the public by publishing in that year his work called "L'Ami des Hommes." Few books have discussed a greater variety of topics, for the marquis ranged from dissertations on free trade to advising mothers to nurse their children; but the theme on which he chiefly dwelt was the importance of agriculture and the measures by which its condition could be improved. The book was written in a style which makes that of Rabelais seem simple, but it was enlivened by a ready wit, it was bizarre, it was original, it discussed themes to which the public attention was turning, and it had an extraordinary

success. It is said that the publishers gained eighty thousand livres from its sale, a marvelous sum to make from any book at that period, and a marvelous sum to make from a treatise on political economy at any period. The theories of the marquis were discussed by every one, from farmers-general to ladies in waiting, and he became a notable personage. "My portrait was in the salon," he says, "and people paid twelve sous for a chair when I went to mass; my daughters were asked in marriage, and I was asked to dinner."

A famous writer on political economy was naturally an object of interest to Mme. de Pompadour's physician, who was seeking for recruits to disseminate his discoveries in political science. They met in the entresol at Versailles, which the doctor occupied. It was there that Quesnay and his followers often debated questions about the best interests of the husbandman, while the favorite and the ministers were preparing foreign policies and choosing generals and ambassadors below; it is probable that the discussions in the entresol were ultimately of more importance, and certainly they helped more to advance the public weal. The first interview between the doctor and his future pupil was stormy. Quesnay told Mirabeau that he knew nothing of political economy, and the marquis intimated that the doctor was a fool. The second interview worked a conversion. David, to use the marquis's own phrase, broke the head of Goliath, the friend of men became one of the most fanatical of Quesnay's admirers, and his conversion was regarded by the Physiocrats as was Omar's acknowledgment of the prophet of God by pious Mahometans.

Mirabeau found many assistants in propagating the truths of which he was, we may say, the most vociferous, although not always the most sagacious defender. Dupont, Morellet, Gournay, and others formed what was known as the school of the Physiocrats, but all declared themselves disciples of the doctor, whom they proclaimed the Confucius of Europe. Quesnay himself published several treatises, though it was as a talker more than as an author that he gained his influence, and from this fact, as well as from his plainness of feature, he was designated by his admirers as the modern Socrates. For some years a journal called the "Ephémérides" was devoted to propagating the principles of the Physiocrats. Though many of their doctrines were rejected by the common sense of Turgot, that great statesman took what was valuable in their teachings, their plans for making the gains of the husbandman greater and the burdens of taxation less, and he would have put many of them into beneficial operation, if ignorance and selfishness had not driven him from power.

The writings of the school excited an interest such as is not often aroused by treatises on political economy. "About this period," says Voltaire, "the public wearied of verses and tragedies, of comedies and operas, of disputes about saving grace and convulsions, and took to discussing the question of wheat; many books were written on this subject, which were read by every one except those who cultivated the soil, but at last, as the readers could not understand the books, they returned to the romances." Such books were certainly read, even if they were not always understood. In the latter part of Louis XV.'s reign, those of the highest position

began to take an unwonted interest in the welfare of the community. There were eloquent writers to give voice to such sentiments, but their works were popular because the public mind was ready for them. In some respects, the rule of Louis XV. was the embodiment of indolent selfishness; there had been no French king so indifferent to the condition of his people, so unconcerned as to the fate of the monarchy, if only he himself could get through life with comfort and without annoyance. Perhaps the excess of this indifference brought its reaction, but at all events, it was in the latter part of his reign, as has been said, that those who had already supped began to consider the condition of those who had not yet dined. Theories which had for their object the welfare of the community received a degree of attention that would not have been accorded to them at any earlier period. The Physiocrats were eager to secure happiness for all and confident that they could do so, and they found many readers who were equally desirous of changes for the better and equally hopeful of their realization.

Their doctrines had the merit of novelty, besides often having the merit of truth. Political economy as a science may be said to have begun its existence in the last century; if it was still very imperfect, yet it was far removed from the darkness of the past. It had been Colbert's profound conviction that in the precious metals consisted a nation's wealth; over and over again he stated this belief, and by the prospect of increasing the number of louis and crowns and livres in France he judged each commercial regulation which he enacted. In this he merely adopted the commercial beliefs which he found; that a bag full of gold pieces stowed away in a garret added to

the national wealth, and that a well-cultivated field, a house stored with articles of luxury and comfort, a warehouse filled with stout boots and warm clothes, were no part of the national wealth would have been disputed by few in the seventeenth century. Certainly it would not have been disputed by Colbert, and by his successors his views were accepted for a hundred years as truths not even to be questioned.

Erroneous as was this theory, it was believed, and it affected every branch of commercial legislation. As purchases from a foreign country were necessarily injurious, these were to be checked where it was possible, and when the government had decided that it knew best where the community should buy their goods, it naturally felt that it could also decide what they ought to buy, and how and by whom these articles should be made. From such principles had proceeded the enormous mass of legislation which regulated the manufactures of France, and which secured to innumerable trades, crafts, professions, and individuals, monopolies of more or less importance.

Like Adam Smith, the Physiocrats declared that natural laws of trade would bring more wealth to the community than any which rulers could devise, and their motto was the famous apothegm, "Laissez faire, laissez passer." [1] The great struggle was to obtain freedom in the purchase and sale of grain; their efforts were at once crowned with some success, and with entire success at last; they could justly claim, as the result of their teachings, that the lot was bettered of every man who sowed a crop of wheat in France.

[1] This maxim was due to Gournay, and not to Quesnay, but it was accepted by all the Physiocrat school.

Commerce in grain was subjected to twofold restrictions, — it could not be exported from the kingdom except when the government saw fit to authorize it, and very often it could not be taken from one province to another in France. When the agricultural interest is powerful, it is often sought to increase the price of food by imposing duties on what is brought from outside. The object of legislation in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was exactly the reverse of this: it was intended to keep down the cost of wheat, to guard against famine and famine prices, and to this end it was forbidden to send grain out of the country, that the entire crop might assure abundance at a moderate figure to the home consumer. If it was an advantage to France as a whole that her husbandmen should not send their grain to be eaten in England or Holland, it followed from the same reasoning that it might be of advantage to the inhabitants of Normandy that her farmers should not send away their grain to Artois or Berry. Thus the peasant, when he raised his crop, could never be sure where he would be allowed to sell it. Every year superintendents and cabinet ministers debated whether permission should be granted for the exportation of grain from France or from any particular province. Always animated with a desire to help the public, they succeeded in making the lot of the cultivator worse, and in producing variations in the price of wheat far more extreme than are ever witnessed under a different system. The soil of France now furnishes nearly enough wheat to nourish forty million people, mostly well fed; in the eighteenth century, famines were frequent when there was but half that population, and many were ill fed. In the days of Colbert, it was esti-

mated that famines of more or less severity occurred on an average once in nine years; if they were less numerous a century later, it was because the severity of restrictive legislation had abated.

The wisdom of such regulations had already been questioned, and Quesnay and his followers were unwearied in their demands for the removal of all restrictions. Their efforts came at a fitting time; the public was ready for novelties; when every principle of religion and of government was freely questioned, it was possible to get a favorable hearing for a proposition to let the farmer sell his wheat where it was wanted. In 1764, two edicts were issued by which the old restrictions were removed, but they proved unsatisfactory in execution. A few years later, Turgot was in power, and a more serious effort was made to allow the free sale of wheat in France; the minister in his zeal directed the parish priests to instruct their parishioners as to the advantages to the public of an unrestricted sale of grain, and surely dogmas less true and less beneficial have often been advocated from the pulpit. The reform was again checked at his overthrow, but the cause was won; at the Revolution the old restraints on the purchase and sale of grain were done away with forever. Doubtless this change would have come erelong, but the Physiocrats are entitled to the credit of having first urged the adoption of measures which helped alike those who bought and those who sold.

It was characteristic of French reformers that, not content with practical ameliorations, they should deduce vast theories underlying all society. Quesnay and his followers did good work in advocating measures to better the lot of French agriculturists, and to

increase the agricultural product, but the great discovery proclaimed by the Confucius of Europe was further reaching than the announcement that freedom to buy and sell would be best for the peasant who raised wheat, and best for the workman who ate it. The Physiocrats exposed the fallacies of the mercantile theory by which gold and silver were thought to constitute a nation's wealth, but in their zeal for agriculture they fell into as gross an error, and declared that the product which annually came from the earth was the only real addition to the national riches; that all the work bestowed in shaping the products of nature to suit man's desires, or in transporting them to the place where they were wanted, could not justly be regarded as increasing the world's wealth. From this principle Quesnay reached his famous discovery of the "net product." "We must take," he said, "the entire annual product of the soil of France, from this we must deduct the cost of producing, with proper allowances for the capital and improvements required; the result will be the net product, and by that amount, and that alone, has the national wealth been increased."

It followed that all laws must be framed so as to increase the net product; whatever made this greater added to human happiness, whatever made it less was necessarily injurious and wrong. To increase the net product was the great object of national life, and a government which would best aid in that result was the best to have. Quesnay decided that under a benevolent and intelligent monarch the largest crop of wheat could probably be raised, and therefore he espoused the cause neither of democracy nor of representative institutions.

Not only principles of government but of morality were drawn from the same fertile maxim. "All the physical and moral advantage of society is summed up in this one point," wrote the Marquis of Mirabeau, "an increase of the net product." Thus a man embarrassed as to the morality of a particular act could find a safe guide for conduct by considering its effect on the production of wheat.

If some enthusiastic Physiocrats sought to find all human happiness in the size of the corn crop, this did not lessen the value of much that they taught. The results of their teachings have been less than those produced by the work of Adam Smith, partly because the great Scotchman had a juster grasp of economic principles and avoided the perilous generalizations into which some of the Physiocrats fell, and partly because their seed fell on a less favorable soil, for in the conception of business principles, as well as in their application, the French have always been inferior to the English.

The abolition of restrictions on the movement of grain was only one of the new principles which found support with the members of this school. They proceeded with the boldness characteristic of political writers of the day, and demanded radical changes in almost every department. The same spirit which led them to advocate the overthrow of protective measures on grain made them the enemies of a host of other commercial restrictions; their motto of "laissez faire" was the reverse of the theory of paternalism which was deeply rooted in every branch of French administration. They were hostile to the protective duties on manufactured goods which had been dear to Colbert; they attacked the vast body of regula-

tions by which that minister and his successors had sought to hold French manufactures in adamantine chains. In no branch of the administration was the tendency to paternalism more curiously manifested. In France, said Turgot, the succession to property was regulated by custom, and the manufacture of a piece of cloth was regulated by law.

It was not only against such mistakes of legislation that the Physiocrats took up arms; the system of collecting taxes furnished them a great field, and here, if they attacked everything, almost everything was wrong. The Marquis of Mirabeau led the assault on the worst evil in the system, — the practice of selling the proceeds of taxation to those who paid for them a fixed sum, and gathered from the people all that they could extract. When he declared in 1760 that, of what the people gave, not over one half found its way into the royal treasury, he exaggerated the evil; when he said that the state had become the tool of the farmers of revenue, that the edicts were pretexts for extortion, that the farmers had bought the nation of the king and in time would destroy alike the nation, the king, and themselves, he went very little beyond the facts. When the government was in sore distress, when repudiation was imminent and revolution was possible, a reform that might deliver it from the slough of financial despond should have been welcomed. The great organization of the farmers-general sucked the lifeblood from a country that, more wisely administered, needed no revolution to secure prosperity for every one, but it was useless to attack the abuses by which they flourished. The publication of a book which showed how the state might realize more and the people pay less was deemed a

crime against the government. At the demand of the farmers-general, Mirabeau was at once arrested and thrown into prison at Vincennes, and it was thus that a reform was received which interfered with powerful private interests.

Notwithstanding such discouragements, the work went on, and in time was to bear fruit; the abolition of the restraints on the movement of grain, the repeal of the code by which manufactures were controlled, the destruction of the system of farming the taxes, were to come sooner or later. Many of these changes were not made until the Revolution, but the teachings of the Physiocrats did not remain fruitless until that time. The rapid increase in wealth and prosperity and population, which marked the half century before the French Revolution, and which prepared the way for it, was to a considerable extent due to the more liberal legislation of that period, and the Physiocrats did valuable work in modifying the evils of the system which they had found.

In Mirabeau's first book he argued that population was the great factor in any increase of a nation's wealth. "You have put the cart before the horse," said his friend Quesnay; "increase the national prosperity, and the increase of population will come soon enough. It is a result and not a cause." So it proved. When the condition of agriculture had improved, the amount of foreign commerce increased, and domestic manufactures had rapidly developed, it was natural that the French population should grow from twenty millions in 1750 to twenty-six millions in 1789.

The importance of the Physiocrat school is sometimes underestimated, but the Encyclopædia has been regarded by all as one of the great achievements of

the age of Louis XV. The idea of an encyclopædia which should be a compendium of human knowledge was not a novel one, but it was undertaken and carried out by Diderot on a scale, and with a completeness, for which there was no precedent. His great work was the first of many similar undertakings, and holds its place as the pioneer in such enterprises. Of encyclopædias, so-called, there had been several; one was published as far back as 1541, and it was succeeded by others, but none of them had even professed to deal with the results of human study in all its various branches. The suggestion for Diderot's project came from England. In 1727, Chambers's Cyclopædia was published in London, and some years later it was proposed to translate it into French. As a result of this scheme, the idea of preparing an encyclopædia was suggested to Diderot, and by his advice it was resolved to begin a new work on a far more comprehensive scale than had yet been attempted. He was eager for the task, he recognized its importance, and the enormous labor which it required attracted instead of dismaying him.

The credit for this great enterprise should, however, be given to Lord Bacon rather than to the imperfect Cyclopædia of Chambers. In the noble preface in which Alembert discussed the objects and the range of the work, he said that he and his associates were endeavoring to put into execution the wish of the English philosopher. "Our principal debt," said Diderot, "will be to Chancellor Bacon, who sketched the plan of a universal dictionary of sciences and arts when there were, so to speak, neither arts nor sciences."

There was no difficulty in obtaining collaborateurs;

the trouble was rather in selecting from the articles submitted, and in declining unfit material without giving offense to friends. The list of contributors comprised all the eminent French authors. Voltaire, Montesquieu, Turgot, Buffon, Rousseau, Quesnay, Condorcet were of the number, and with them were associated many professional writers of less repute, men of special learning in their particular branches, magistrates, officials, and travelers. Voltaire, in his zeal for the cause, disdained no work, however humble. "I am the encyclopædic errand boy," he said, and he performed any task assigned to him. "I will do the article on commas if you wish," he wrote, and the others worked with the same ardor.

The pages of the Encyclopædia were open to all, and at the beginning, certainly, it was not intended to be an engine for proselytism, yet the political and religious beliefs of those charged with the enterprise gave it a character that soon excited powerful enemies. The plan had been submitted to Aguesseau, who extended to it the approval of the government, and if the authorities had been left in peace, probably they would not have interfered with the progress of the work. But from the first the clergy looked with disfavor upon an undertaking in which they were not asked to take part, and which was in the hands of writers known for the freedom of their criticisms upon the dogmas of the church. In 1751, the first volume appeared, and the second in 1752; they were received with widespread interest, and it was admitted that the work, from its extent, and from the ability with which it was conducted, must be regarded as one of the great achievements of the human intellect. It was certain, indeed, from the tone of many articles and

from the views of the chief contributors, that its effect upon the public mind would not lead them to submit with any more docility to demands for confessional certificates, or incline them to read with edification the pastorals which ecclesiastics like the Archbishop of Paris were constantly issuing. The hostility felt towards the Encyclopædia by those in authority in the French church was natural, and from their standpoint was justified.

On the other hand, the government at first found little in the work which advocated revolutionary doctrines in the state, and many of those in power were ready to allow the publication to proceed undisturbed. Their laggard zeal in the cause of repression was stimulated by the religious party at court, and to such appeals the government was sure to respond, though sometimes with more apparent earnestness than real vigor. To the complaints made by the clergy in the name of religion the king himself always gave attention; he was a fervent believer, and viewed the progress of heresy with as much disapproval as the Archbishop of Paris, but his taste for persecution produced small results. In answer to these protests, the two volumes already published were in 1752 ordered to be suppressed, and the papers and plates were seized. The value of the work was indeed recognized, but the Jesuits, it was said, who combined learning with piety, could carry on the enterprise so as to convey information without harming religion. This was in February, and by May the government had receded from its position. Diderot and Alembert were again in possession of the plates, the work proceeded without further molestation, and by 1757 seven volumes had been published. The popularity of the Encyclo-

pædia steadily increased, and the list of two thousand subscribers at the beginning had now grown to over four thousand. It was a liberal subscription for the period, and for a work much more costly than the encyclopædias of our day. The cost of the entire series was nearly one thousand livres; as much in relative value as five hundred dollars would be now.

The financial results of the enterprise, though considerable, were insignificant when compared with the attention which it excited and the influence which it exercised, and this success again aroused the activity of its enemies. The Encyclopædia, they said, was a great scheme for affecting public opinion undertaken by a body of able and unscrupulous writers; it was a thing which had not been seen in the past, an extraordinary and portentous phenomenon. In 1759, a complaint was lodged with the Parliament against the Encyclopædia, declaring it to be a work dangerous to religion. It was certain that this would be favorably received, for there was as much likelihood of finding tolerance for advanced and novel theories with the doctors of the Sorbonne as with the judges of the Parliament of Paris.

The magistrates had no opportunity to pass upon the character of the work; a decree of the royal council annulled the privilege formerly granted, and forbade the sale of the volumes which had already been printed. Such a decree seems an outrageous exercise of tyrannical authority, a destruction of property and of the results of enormous intellectual effort, expended in an enterprise which the government had sanctioned. So it would have been, if it had been enforced and the completion of the work been prevented. But this was neither done, nor was it even anticipated, unless by

some zealous priest, unfamiliar with the workings of Louis XV.'s government. The withdrawal of privilege rendered the publication somewhat more difficult, and at least some pretense of concealment was necessary. Alembert, wearied of the annoyances and disputes in which he had been involved, abandoned the enterprise, and his example was followed by some timorous collaborateurs. But Diderot proceeded with the Encyclopædia as if no edict forbidding its appearance had been issued, and the labor of preparation and publication was never even suspended. Some of his friends advised him to remove to a country where the law would not interfere, but he decided that it would be more convenient to carry on the work at Paris, and this he did. The only effect of the order forbidding the enterprise was that it was carried on with somewhat more alacrity than when it appeared with the government license. In 1765, six years after the privilege was withdrawn, the remaining ten volumes were published and distributed to subscribers. The Encyclopædia of Diderot was finished and given to the world with much less delay than has attended the publication of many modern encyclopædias, prepared where absolute liberty of the press prevailed.

The clergy did not altogether abandon their efforts to check its evil influence. In 1770, at their general assembly, they again requested the king to enforce the laws against the sale of the work. Accordingly the officials seized a large number of copies then offered for sale, and carried them to the Bastille, but they were soon given back to the publishers. At the same assembly the clergy adopted another measure which proved no more efficacious. The Abbé Bergier was employed at an annual salary of two thousand livres

to refute whatever was pernicious in the writings of the Encyclopædists. Doubtless he drew his allowance, but the refutation was never completed.[1]

Voltaire has given an amusing report of a conversation in which the rulers of the state were impressed by the value of the Encyclopædia and the folly of prohibiting its sale. Mme. de Pompadour did not know how to mix her rouge, and the ministers were ignorant as to the exact composition of gunpowder; some lackeys brought in the twenty prohibited volumes, the information was obtained, and all agreed as to the value of the work and the glory which would be reflected on a king in whose reign it was published.

The incident was imaginary, but the conversation which was supposed to have occurred between favorite and ministers expressed the views of many in authority who were charged with the duty of stopping the enterprise. Louis was ready to issue an edict prohibiting the sale of the Encyclopædia, but he was incapable of insisting on its execution, and his servants were lukewarm in the cause. The Jesuits were indeed eager to suppress the publication, but they were soon engaged in defending themselves, instead of attacking others. Before Diderot's work was finished, its most persistent enemies had been expelled from France. It is not surprising that the Encyclopædia continued to appear, peacefully and prosperously, in defiance of law. The shifts required were so slight that they did not even materially increase the expenses of the undertaking or affect its pecuniary success. It is said that the publishers cleared over a million livres. Diderot had no interest in the profits, and received beggarly compensation for his prodigious labors; his salary

[1] *Mém. de Bachaumont*, v. 91, 179, 278, *et pas.*

averaged about three thousand livres a year; he was poorly paid in money, but he reaped his reward in fame.[1]

The toil expended on the Encyclopædia was not in vain; it was not only a vast compendium of useful learning, but, what was of greater importance, more than any other one work it influenced French political and religious beliefs. The Encyclopædists were innovators, but innovation was needed; the list would be long of the changes in scientific conceptions and in political institutions which were advocated by these courageous thinkers, and which have since been adopted with the approval of all.

They were among the first in France to attack the slave trade. Not only man's lack of sympathy for his fellow men still allowed the barbarities of slavery, but the enormous profit in the trade dulled the appreciation of its iniquity. One hundred livres, it was estimated, would defray the cost of buying or kidnapping a negro on the Guinea coast; when he was delivered at San Domingo, he could be sold for a thousand livres.[2] The Encyclopædists raised their voices against an iniquitous traffic which had not disquieted the clergy.

In this work the advocates of political reforms of every nature found their opportunity to address the public. Quesnay wrote for it, and argued for the principle of free trade in grain; its pages were open to the economists, who sought to improve the condi-

[1] Morley's *Diderot* contains a full and interesting account of the publication and character of the Encyclopædia. Its progress and its influence are constantly referred to in contemporary literature.

[2] D'Aubigny, *Choiseul et la France d'outre mer*, 220.

tion of agriculture and to free manufactures from burdensome restrictions. In the Encyclopædia the injuries wrought by corvées, by the gabelle and the taille, were set out; the evils of the excessive protection of game were exposed, and there was hardly a political abuse that was not intelligently discussed. Most of the reforms of the next half century were first advocated in the Encyclopædia. The abuses which it attacked were so manifestly injurious that when once they were explained to the public, when the light of discussion was turned upon them and popular interest was aroused for their overthrow, it was impossible they should much longer continue.

In the scientific articles there are indeed many defects, when we compare them with the results of later researches. But it was not without just cause that Alembert declared that Bacon had furnished the inspiration for their work; their investigations in science proceeded on correct principles, and these in time were sure to bring correct results. From the Encyclopædia dates the great development of scientific research that within fifty years produced more valuable discoveries in France than had been made in centuries before.

Undoubtedly, the religious attitude of the Encyclopædists justified the opposition of the clergy. Whatever was the belief or unbelief of the most active contributors, whether they were rationalists or deists or materialists, they were all united in opposition to the French church as it then existed; the most sincere believer in Christianity can hardly criticise them for that. The character of the church and its clergy is disclosed in any history of Louis XV.'s reign, — the narrowness of their views, the intolerance of their

precepts, their opposition to any rational advance in science and learning. The "infamous thing," to the overthrow of which Voltaire devoted the latter part of his life, was not Christianity, but the religious organization which was then in power. If the criticisms of the Encyclopædists on the articles of religious belief often seem to us narrow and violent, marked alike by bad logic and bad taste, the success of their attacks upon the attitude of the church as a religious and social organization is their vindication. The old régime has not more utterly perished than has the old religious system of France. When we consider from how different a standpoint the community now regards questions of tolerance, of science, of history, and of morality, we must admit that the modes of thought against which the Encyclopædists carried on war have passed away forever.

Some brief reference may be made to the men whose writings were most influential in this period of intellectual unrest. The philosophical school consisted of a body of writers closely united and working together for a common cause; not often in literature has an organization been formed which might fairly be compared with that of a political party. The public mind was affected, not by one or two men of great genius, but by the united efforts of a large number of able men; the literary movement of the time was a sort of intellectual propaganda. Undoubtedly, the opposition they met, the fulminations of the clergy, the restraint exercised by the state, tended to form those seeking political and intellectual reform into a united body; they banded together for self-protection as well as for victory. But among many active workers, a few men of genius led the way in which

others followed, and stand conspicuous among their fellows.

Montesquieu is not ranked among the writers who attacked religious beliefs and political institutions. Between the judicial calmness of the "Esprit des Lois" and the polemics of Diderot or the atheism of Holbach there is a great difference in tone, and yet on the modification of existing modes of thought Montesquieu exerted as large an influence as the most radical of the Encyclopædists. In his writings there is nothing revolutionary in expression. The eastern sage in the "Persian Letters," who finds objects of witty ridicule in French institutions and society, advocates no changes, and he discusses what he sees with the easy badinage of Voltaire's earlier writings. In the "Esprit des Lois" there is much commendation of English institutions, but though the writer bestowed praise on English forms of government, he hesitated to suggest that any change was needed in that of France. Montesquieu thought that the purchase of judicial offices worked better in practice than a system of selection which professed to be based on merit, but would necessarily be controlled by influence; he defended the institution of farmers-general as an advisable method for the collection of taxes. Such a man was not a radical reformer.

Yet when the nature of governments was dissected by an acute mind, the reader drew the inferences which the author was too cautious to state. A social and political system so artificial as that of France was left in peace while no inquiry was made as to the possibility of improvement. Montesquieu attempted a philosophical investigation of political organizations, and such a process was as certain to change

popular conceptions of the government under which the French people lived, as was the application of Baconian methods of inquiry to change beliefs concerning the universe that had been established by the metaphysical reasoning of the schoolmen.

In the popular mind Voltaire stands as the incarnation of the destructive philosophy which led to the Revolution, and yet the Sage of Ferney was almost as far as Montesquieu from sympathizing with the atheism of Holbach or the political propaganda of Rousseau. The sneers at religion in his earlier works were little more than the jests regarded as marks of polite breeding by the associates of the regent. When his travels in England had familiarized him with the writings of the English deists, his attacks on religion wore a more serious form, yet he was still far from instituting a crusade against L'Infame.

In a desire for political reforms, Voltaire never fully sympathized with many of the associates of his later years. His criticism of existing institutions was indeed destructive, and his active mind was fascinated by the possibilities of social change that he foresaw. "Everything that I see," he wrote in 1764, "is casting the seeds of a revolution that will surely come, and of which I shall not have the felicity of being a witness. . . . The young are fortunate, they will see fine things." Voltaire would not have witnessed with pleasure the social devastation of the Revolution. The oratory at the Jacobin Club would have seemed to him a sorry substitute for the conversation at the Prince of Conti's, but his intellect was ready for new phases of thought, and found in them its greatest enjoyment. His interest in that strange chapter of history would have overshadowed his disapproval, and

the events of the Revolution would not have frightened Voltaire into conservatism. His body he would have kept safely at Ferney, but reactionary principles would not have been advocated by his trenchant pen.

Yet, in truth, Voltaire disturbed himself little about forms of government or purely political questions. He had an honest love for intellectual freedom; he wished that every man might say and publish what seemed good to him so long as he published no libel upon Voltaire; he was sincere in his hatred of ecclesiastical intolerance and oppression. In discussions as to the corvée, or the gabelle, or the free sale of wheat, he took no active part; he admired much in England, but he did not care to see a representative government established in France. "The philosophers," he wrote, "will not disturb the state. . . . They desire only to live in peace under thè established government." He was wrong in his prophecy, but to a certain extent such was his own wish. At Cirey, he said, dwelt philosophy and literature, peace and felicity. Voltaire was not the apostle of discontent, nor did he create an imaginary people, composed of wise and virtuous individuals, on which to base any scheme for social reformation. The pictures drawn by Rousseau of a community governing itself with perfect wisdom and actuated by perfect unselfishness never imposed upon Voltaire's acute and critical intelligence. "I doubt whether this class of citizens (those who live by manual labor) will ever have the time or the capacity to instruct themselves; they would die of hunger before they could become philosophers. . . . It is not the artisan we must instruct, but the good bourgeois, the inhabitant of cities." Yet his mind was so alert that every phase of argument presented itself to him.

"If you treat the masses like a herd of cattle," he wrote again, "they will turn and gore you with their horns." "The most tolerable of governments is a republic, because it reproduces most closely the condition of natural equality. . . . The people wish only liberty and equality."

His own social tastes conflicted with the results that naturally followed from much that he wrote. "Here," said Voltaire once at the dinner-table of the Prince of Conti, "I think we are all princes or poets." Such a combination was eminently agreeable to him. No one would have seen with less pleasure an aristocracy, fitted by education and taste to receive with favor the greatest wit and writer of the time, succeeded by a leveling democracy, and yet few did more to bring about such a result.

It would have been alike good policy and magnanimous if the great poet had been allowed to remain at Versailles, receiving the incense of flattery from king and court. No revenue officers at the frontier could keep Voltaire's books and doctrines from entering France; but if he had continued in the enjoyment of that court favor which was to him so agreeable, there would have been some restraint on the freedom with which he gave them to the world. It is hard to say that anything could have checked the unwearied activity of Voltaire's mind, but neither the French monarchy nor the French church would have found him so dangerous an enemy, if he had spent his days at Versailles instead of at Ferney.

When Holbach's "Social System" appeared, Voltaire at once declared his disapproval of the atheistic doctrines of the work. "The patriarch," said Grimm, "cannot give up his deity that rewards and punishes.

. . . He thinks the idea of a Supreme Being a check useful to men, and especially to princes." Voltaire found much in the crudeness of Holbach's views which was not to his taste, and he was, moreover, quite willing to express his disapproval of a work that found no favor with princes. He never forgot, as has been said, that whatever might be the truth as to the existence of a higher power that meted out recompense and vengeance, there was certainly a system of rewards and punishments existing at Versailles. But neither Voltaire's ingenious flattery nor the favor of Mme. de Pompadour could procure for him Louis XV.'s good will, and the court life of the great iconoclast was brief.

Voltaire's activity was so varied, his position was so imposing and unique, that his work is more familiar to posterity than that of any other person who figured in the long reign of Louis XV. Yet a word may be said of the influence he exerted in one of the most important fields for human effort. However imperfect are most histories, the record of man's failures and achievements in the past, if these be related with perfect insight and truth, would constitute the most valuable study for man in the present. The progress of the race in the future could be traced with almost as much certainty as the future movements of the solar system, if our intelligence could completely grasp in all their infinite variety the lessons of human experience.

No wisdom will attain that result, but Voltaire found historical writing in France an unprofitable record of unimportant events; he gave to it a new life and new value; he understood what was of importance in the past and of value to posterity. His execution was often imperfect, as are all historical

works, but his conception of historical science was new, just, and profound. Mme. du Châtelet said she found in modern histories only a record of events without connection or sequence, an account of battles which settled nothing, a study which overwhelmed the mind without illuminating it. No one could say that of the historical works written by Voltaire. Their generalizations were often imperfect, their statements of events were not always accurate, but Voltaire sought to gather from the past what would instruct the reader and would not confuse him, the progress of human intelligence, the development of social life, the records of commerce and art, of taxation and legislation, of forms of government and phases of thought.[1]

More than half of Louis XV.'s reign passed before any serious attack was made upon the established faith. Voltaire and others found occasion, indeed, to cast sneers upon the church and insinuate doubt as to its doctrines, but not until the middle of the century was there a body of influential writers actively engaged in attacking the beliefs of the Christian religion.

Of these men, Diderot was one of the ablest. The son of a cutler, educated by the Jesuits, and destined by his father to become a priest, he went to Paris, pursued his studies with zeal, and sought to make his way in the world by any means open to a clever young man, without friends or influence to aid him. He translated books, and it is said he put his talents to use by writing sermons for priests who were willing

[1] The review of Voltaire's place in historical writing in Morley's *Life of Voltaire* is, it seems to me, the most valuable chapter of that interesting work.

to avail themselves of his literary facility, without inquiring into his religious convictions. By such devices he gained a precarious livelihood, and he made acquaintances among the literary men of the day.

He soon attempted more serious work, and in his "Philosophical Thoughts," published in 1746, he gave utterance to the views of which he was to be so famous an exponent. The book at once attracted attention by the clearness of the style and the vigor of the arguments, and was followed in 1749 by the "Letter on the Blind." This gained for Diderot the persecution which was then the seal of fame. He was arrested and sent to the prison of Vincennes, and there he remained for four months. He came from his prison a man known in the world, and the "Letter" was read by thousands who otherwise would not have known of its publication. Diderot's position was established as one of the leaders of French thought, and he continued his writings for thirty years, without again being subjected to the penalties of the law.

His influence, like that of many of his associates, was in no inconsiderable part due to his talent in conversation. In literary skill he was infinitely inferior to Voltaire, but all agreed that he was a marvelous talker, and his genius shone most in oral exposition. In the salons, where savants and philosophers gathered, Diderot was an admired guest. He was a heavy, fat man, says a frequent auditor, with the figure of a porter, but his conversation was inexhaustible, without ever being tedious; it was full of vivacity and fire, and like a display of fireworks that dazzled and delighted.[1]

Hardly had he been released from Vincennes when he undertook the chief work of his life; in coöpera-

[1] *Mém. de Cheverny*, ii. 17.

tion with Alembert, he commenced the preparation of the Encyclopædia; for twenty years he devoted a powerful intellect and an unwearied industry to the great enterprise, and the glory of its accomplishment belongs to him.

Diderot has shared the fate of many of his associates; having exerted a great influence in his day, his books a hundred years later are unread. The neglect is due to a lack of high literary merit. Diderot's style tended to become exaggerated and declamatory; it is often as wearisome to read one of his treatises as to read an oration of Barère. If the form was defective the matter was weighty, but that also has ceased to interest because the abuses and the errors which Diderot attacked have for the most part been swept away. The battle is won, and the weapons used in the contest are of no further value.

Diderot had as an associate, in the preparation of the Encyclopædia, a man hardly less prominent in the councils of the philosophical party. Like Diderot, Alembert had made his way from a humble origin, and he could not even claim a poor but honest parentage. The illegitimate son of Mme. Tencin, a woman equally noted for her talents and her vices, he was a nephew of Cardinal Tencin, whose reputation for sagacity was hardly inferior to that of Dubois, and whose reputation for morality was certainly no better. Alembert's mother left him on the steps of the church of St. John the Round; he was picked up, carried to a hospital, and thus began life. A certain allowance, paid by a father who declined to acknowledge the child publicly, secured for him a good education, and his talents as a mathematician gave him prominence while still young. He made important

discoveries in the principles of equilibrium, in the calculus, and in the phenomena of the precession of the equinoxes. As a mathematician, Alembert may be regarded as a man of genius, but as a writer and a dialectician, he was inferior to Diderot, and he by no means possessed the undaunted courage of that apostle of the new faith.

Alembert contributed largely to the success of the early volumes of the Encyclopædia; the scientific and mathematical articles were under his supervision, and he wrote the famous introduction which defined its scope. Not only did Alembert do much work himself in the preparation of articles, but he secured the assistance of many valuable coöperators. His relations with Voltaire were always harmonious, and he obtained his aid for the new enterprise, which was not, indeed, a difficult task.

The increasing hostility which the Encyclopædia excited only increased Diderot's zeal, but it was very distasteful to Alembert. He had moreover stirred up a very hornet's nest by his article on Geneva. In that he said of the clergy of the town, intending it in all honor, that instead of wrangling over matters which no one could understand, they were tolerant, and they combined exemplary morals with a rejection of the doctrines of Hell-fire. If he had called them the hounds of the Inquisition and the slaves of superstition, his remarks would have excited no more displeasure. The clergy of Geneva repelled the praise bestowed upon their reasonable doctrines and denounced the author; the Catholic clergy, whose bigotry Alembert had thought to condemn in praising the moderation of their rivals, were equally incensed, and still another and a very different party felt bound to join in the attack.

Rousseau took up arms against Alembert, not because he had abused the clergy, but because he had praised the theatre and advised the citizens of Geneva to allow theatrical representations among them. It was probably the wish to declare his rupture with the Encyclopædists, and vent his ill will upon Alembert, rather than any pious interest in the morals of the town, that led Rousseau to write a letter that filled a volume, in which he expressed his views as to the stage, and warned his fellow Genevans to reject the pernicious advice given them. Alembert behaved himself with calmness and good judgment amid all this turmoil, but if such quarrels did not disturb his equanimity, he did not feel the joy of the battle, and when the Encyclopædia was put under the ban of the law, he was quite ready to quit the cause.

A book written by a man who had no claim to rank with thinkers like Diderot and Alembert so greatly excited public feeling at this period that some mention should be made of its author. Helvetius was a member of the company of farmers-general, and was more known for his profuse hospitality than for any remarkable intellectual qualities, but he was early enrolled among the patrons of the philosophers, and his salon was one of the most frequented in Paris. He showed his zeal for philosophy in a manner practiced by few. In 1750, when only thirty-five years of age, he resigned his position as a farmer-general, contented with the wealth he had already acquired, and wishing to give his whole time to the studies and the society in which he found his happiness. Surrounded by men whose writings had made them famous, it was not strange that Helvetius wished to be known, not only as a patron, but as a professor of literature, and

after some unimportant ventures, in 1758, appeared his famous work, "L'Esprit."

Many of the ideas which he gave to the world he had gleaned from those who gathered about his table, and some of them he exaggerated until they became paradoxes. But his modes of thought were orderly and logical, he expressed his views with a crudeness in which there was no disguise, and he put into a book theories which others had been content to advocate in private. In his work Helvetius argued that utility was the only test of conduct, the prospect of advantage the only thing which made men prefer virtue to vice. "They make so much ado about Helvetius," said Mme. du Deffand, "because he has revealed everybody's secret." If many people had really governed their conduct with reference to the main chance, the fact had not been acknowledged, even to themselves, and it was with a shock that they saw their hidden motives published as established principles. Those who had all along insisted that the philosophers and Encyclopædists were a lot of immoral atheists now found new support for their contention, and the scandal caused by Helvetius's book was immense. It had received the approval of the government censor, almost without examination; he assumed that a rich farmer-general would not advance doctrines dangerous to a society in which his own lot was so comfortable. When the book came to be read and criticised, the censor was removed from his position, and Helvetius found that he had attained a notoriety beyond his desires. His work was condemned by the Pope, the Parliament, and the Sorbonne, and it was burned by the hangman; he was removed from the position he held in the queen's household, and was required

to retract the pernicious doctrines to which he had given utterance. He manifested less boldness in defending his position than in assuming it, and he wrote a letter in which he sought to retract his errors. This was not deemed sufficient, and he was compelled to sign a second retraction, so humiliating, said Grimm, that it would not have been surprising to see a man take refuge among the Hottentots rather than consent to set his name to it.[1]

Notwithstanding such mortifications, Helvetius's book not only gave him a prodigious notoriety, but it established his position as a leader of the philosophical school. Many of his associates refused to accept all his conclusions, his reasonings were often superficial and his judgments inaccurate, but in declaring that the general utility, the greatest happiness of all, was the true test by which conduct must be regulated and to reach which legislation should be framed, he enrolled himself among the political thinkers of the new school.

The agitation over his theories interfered with the progress of the Encyclopædia. Helvetius's book, said the church party, was a mere compendium of what could be found in that work, and it showed the danger of allowing such a publication; if a man of wealth and intelligence declared that conduct should be governed solely by the dictates of selfishness, and that the old boundaries of right and wrong, established by religion and sanctioned by experience, had no real foundation, what would be the effect of the pernicious doctrines of the Encyclopædists when circulated among the ignorant, the discontented, and the vicious? In 1759, the license for the publication of the Encyclo-

[1] *Cor. Lit.*, August, 1758.

pædia was revoked, and from that time the work progressed, and was given to the public, in violation of law.

Holbach, like Helvetius, first became known as an Amphytrion. A German by birth, his life was spent at Paris, and among the salons in which the teachers of the new philosophies collected, his was the most famous. "Holbach," said the Abbé Galiani, "keeps the café of Europe." His house, on the Rue Royale, was known by its frequenters as the Synagogue, and there gathered all the rabbis and earnest believers of the new faith.

At the table of Baron Holbach were seen almost every well-known French writer, as well as the famous men from other countries, who came to Paris as the centre of European thought. Hume and Wilkes and Sterne, Garrick and Priestley and Barré, were among the English who shared his hospitality. The literati who dined with Helvetius on Tuesday and Mme. Geoffrin on Wednesday were found with Holbach on Thursday and Sunday; there from ten to twenty guests gathered to enjoy good fare, excellent wine, superior coffee, and the best talk in Europe. Religion, philosophy and government, literature and science, were discussed in their turn; there was no theory too bold to be advanced, or to find supporters. Morellet demonstrated that all restrictions on trade should be abolished; Diderot and Holbach proved that a belief in God must be done away with; Galiani, the most skeptical of all, was not even certain of the efficacy of free grain or of the non-existence of a Creator.[1]

[1] *Mém. de Morellet*, i. 132 *et pas.*; *Mém. de Marmontel*, iii. 13; *Lettres de Galiani*, etc.

Holbach was himself a man of parts, — he was highly educated, he was familiar with several languages, he combined learning with good manners. He was not content to remain merely a listener, while the falsity of all religions and the absurdity of most forms of government were discussed by his guests; though not a man who amid different surroundings would have originated revolutionary theories, he possessed no inconsiderable skill in presenting to the public the ideas which he had imbibed from others. How far he was himself the author of the books which appeared in his name has been disputed; his most famous work was attributed to Diderot, who probably assisted in its revision, and certainly contributed much to its theories by word of mouth.[1]

Still Holbach remains one of the most industrious and by no means the least influential of the writers who, towards the end of Louis XV.'s reign, were busy in attacking religion and government. The titles of many of his works indicate the views he sought to propagate. In 1767 appeared "Christianity Unveiled" and "Sacerdotal Imposture;" in the following year, "The Priests Unmasked." He was a diligent and a sincere follower of Voltaire, but in boldness of statement he far surpassed his teacher. Diderot said, "I like a philosophy that is clear and frank and definite, and such you have given us in 'The System of Nature.' The author is not an atheist on one page and a deist on the next."

There was no misunderstanding Holbach's posi-

[1] Many of Holbach's books were not published under his name, as was the fashion of the time, but no effort was made to conceal the authorship. The custom of publishing books under fictitious names was encouraged by Voltaire.

tions; he was a materialist who regarded talk about the soul as nonsensical, and an atheist who thought that belief in a God was absurd. "The dogma of a future life," he wrote, "is one of the most fatal errors with which humanity has been infested. . . . The religions of the future world have helped the priest to conquer this world." [1] He believed that the church and the established system of theology had debased human intelligence, lessened human activity, inculcated selfishness, and lowered morality. In a famous passage he declared that nature taught man to be free, to be happy, to be patriotic, to search for the truth, and to serve his fellow men; religion taught him that he was a slave condemned by God to groan under the rod of God's representatives; that he should remain ignorant and miserable, seeking only his own selfish welfare in a world beyond the grave, that he should lead a life neither useful to himself nor to others. As was natural in the reaction from a dogmatic theology, Holbach was equally dogmatic in his denial; he did not assign to the realm of the unknown the mysteries surrounding man's life; he laid down with perfect confidence the doctrines of an unwavering materialism.

Twenty-five years before, the philosophers who discussed with freedom the absurdities of religion spoke with caution, or not at all, of the political organization of the state. But now the movement had advanced further. If Holbach denounced the iniquities of the Christian church, he was no less outspoken in dealing with the French government as it existed under the most Christian king. In his works the orators of the Jacobin Club found abundant material, and yet, after

[1] *Système de la Nature*, i. 271, 8.

all, statements which then seemed revolutionary are now little more than commonplaces. Holbach declared that the obedience of a people to its rulers could have no motive except the advantages which it had the right to expect, that the nation, the true source of all legitimate authority, should decide whether it was well or ill governed, whether laws were useful or harmful, and that kings were made for the people and not the people for kings. "Almost everywhere," he says again, "the sovereign is everything and the nation is nothing, and yet it is rare to find a sovereign who gives himself the trouble to perform the duties of his position."[1] His disciples reasoned that when sovereigns who neglected their duties for their pleasures were replaced by rulers chosen by the people, good government would be universal, but their confident belief has not been entirely verified.

Holbach's utterances were the natural outcome of twenty years of agitation, yet they alarmed many who had been active in assailing religion and criticising government. Nobles who had listened with approval to the talk of philosophers were appalled at the teachings of the "System of Nature." There were many among Holbach's associates who took pains to declare their disapproval of his views, and to denounce a work that inculcated atheism and anarchy. Voltaire announced his dissent from those perilous doctrines; even Frederick II. felt bound to publish his disapproval of Holbach's views. The great king was ready to applaud those who attacked Christianity, but his favor turned to ill will when he saw the principles of authority treated as no more sacred than those of religion. When the philosophers declared

[1] *Système Social.*

that bad government was as injurious as priestcraft, that not only must Christianity be abolished, but society be renovated, they were no longer viewed with approval at Potsdam.

In considering the extraordinary development of scientific research in this period, it is impossible to overlook the great name of Buffon. Modern science has declined to accept many of his brilliant generalizations, but no one can question the importance of the influence he exerted. When only a little over thirty, he published his first book, and it gained for him a place in the Academy and among French men of science. The first volume of the "Natural History" appeared in 1749, a year after the "Esprit des Lois;" if the work of the naturalist now seems less valuable than that of his rival for fame, it exercised an equal influence, and it was at that period perhaps of equal value.

Buffon was a constant and industrious worker. At six o'clock each morning, a servant aroused the great man, and he began his labors; neither the pleasures of youth nor the weaknesses of age ever kept him from his task; his long, studious career is imposing and almost appalling. When a young man, he was appointed superintendent of the Jardin des Plantes, and he made it the most important collection of natural history in Europe. There he began his great work, and there for fifty years of uninterrupted toil he continued it, without haste and without rest, laboring with almost the majestic regularity of the nature which he described.

To the perfection of his style he gave an incredible amount of care; when a man of seventy, he was said to have copied his "Epochs of Nature" eighteen times.

"The style is the man" is a famous saying attributed to Buffon, and of him it was true. It is unfair, however, to exaggerate the meaning of his apothegm. In his discourse on style before the Academy, he justly said that to write well was to think well, and that the ideas must form the basis of a style, to which the harmony of the words was but the accessory. Such toil was not wasted; the eloquence, the charm which he threw around the results of his labors not only secured his fame, but excited a widespread interest in theories which, if sometimes faulty, were far in advance of the mediæval absurdities that were still received. New conceptions were formed of the universe, of man's creation and his place in the world, and an impulse was given to the activity which soon made France a leader in the study of physical science.

As for Buffon himself, his fame filled the world. Like Voltaire, he was fortunate in having a long life, and his work took a stronger hold from its very bulk. During forty years, the books of Buffon were appearing in slow and solemn procession, discussing in their general aspects, if not in detail, geology, cosmogony, and natural history. Not only his name, but his theories, became known in every part of Europe. The Empress Catherine sent him her portrait set with diamonds, and the great naturalist returned his thanks with a majestic courtesy that would have been appropriate for a sovereign expressing his gratitude to another. Even corsairs on the high seas recognized his fame and, separating from their spoils the collections addressed to Buffon, allowed those to proceed to their destination.

With all this industry, his mind did not find its greatest pleasure in the minute investigations which

led to the discoveries of a Darwin. "I write of the universe," he said, and vast speculations were more to his taste than the study of apparently unimportant data, upon which, perhaps, a truer theory of geological changes might have been based. "It was of more value," he said again, "to advance even a false theory, when that helped to bind together our discoveries, than to furnish merely crude and unarranged facts." Such a procedure was not without peril, but Buffon, for his day, possessed an uncommon knowledge of the details of science, and he had in an unusual degree the gift of happy inspiration. Cuvier said that Aristotle's description of an elephant was more accurate than that of Buffon, but many of Buffon's speculations have proved nearer the truth, and more fruitful in their results, than those of Cuvier.

It would, indeed, be idle to claim that he grasped clearly the theories of the development of species which have since been accepted, yet he obtained from his investigation of nature juster conceptions of her general processes than some of those who observed isolated data with more care. "Nature proceeds," he wrote, "by unknown gradations. . . . She passes from one species to another, and often from one genus to another, by imperceptible shades of distinction." The few hundred species of which he gave the history could, he said, be reduced to a small number of families, from which it was not impossible that all the others issued; and if it could be shown that a species was produced by degeneration from another, then it could be justly inferred that, with sufficient time, all organized beings might have sprung from one.

If some of Buffon's conjectures were those of a man of genius, many of them certainly were far removed

from scientific accuracy, and yet they exercised a great influence on European thought; his well-balanced periods did as much to change the mental standpoint as the fulminations of Diderot or the sarcasms of Voltaire. It has been said of Descartes that if he was mistaken as to the laws of movement, he was at any rate among the first to divine that there were any laws of movement. Buffon is entitled to similar praise. The seven epochs into which he divided the world's history may not correspond with the actual processes of nature, but in an unscientific age, when almost all believed that the world had been suddenly evolved out of chaos and specially prepared for man's delectation, Buffon appeared with a theory of the development of the universe, accomplished by the slow operation of nature's laws, based, not upon any explanation of final causes or the purposes for which the world was intended, but upon the record of the rocks and the mountains, upon the traces of nature's processes that are disclosed to man's eye.

Such conceptions he rendered clear, and presented in attractive form; his works were not intended for a small body of specialists, but for all those who desired knowledge on such subjects. He had, in a preëminent degree, the gift which did so much to extend the influence of French thought over Europe, — all that he wrote was clear to the least intelligent reader. His theories had a marvelous lucidity; he caught the popular mind, as Rousseau did with speculations of a very different nature, by a clearness of expression which always charmed, and which carried a conviction that was not always deserved. Buffon's theory of the universe, like the "Social Contract,"

impressed itself upon the public by its orderly and harmonious exposition; it seemed that it must be true because it was so plain. There were sophistries in both works, but this did not lessen their effect on the generation for which they were written.

Science has not adopted all the views advanced by Buffon in his "Epochs of Nature," but he was among the first to conceive a system of the universe founded on observation; he was the first to give to such a theory an orderly form, and to interest the world in it. This was a great step. Buffon called attention to the presence of marine shells on mountains, as a proof of the former presence of the sea where now is dry land. This generalization may not seem remarkable to us, but when Buffon gave utterance to it, even a man of some scientific learning like Voltaire was content to argue that the shells were left by wandering pilgrims on their return from Palestine.

Buffon kept aloof from the destructive tenets of the revolutionary school; his theories of the universe did not lead him to advance any views as to God or man that were distasteful to church or state; he avoided expressions that could shock either the court or the Sorbonne; even Louis XV. never begrudged liberal allowances for the royal garden of which Buffon was the head. Yet he exercised a great influence on that modification of thought which resulted from new conceptions of the formation and development of the universe and its inhabitants. It is for this reason that the name of Buffon would still deserve its place in the records of science, though every description he wrote were shown to be inaccurate and every theory he advanced were proven to be erroneous. It is for this reason, also, that he must be

placed with Voltaire and Montesquieu and Rousseau, with the Encyclopædists and the economists, with those who changed the standpoint of the French mind, who opened to it new fields, revealed to it new conceptions of life, and in so doing helped to bring to an end the forms of thought and of government which they found established under Louis XV.

Rousseau was befriended by the coterie of the Encyclopædists, and his breach with them was largely due to his vanity and excessive irritability, yet the influence of his writings was directly opposed to that of the philosophers whose enemy he became; between his views and theirs there was an irrepressible conflict.

When Rousseau assumed his rôle as a political teacher, his tenets were better qualified to find favor than those of the writers who thus far could be regarded as precursors of the Revolution. A belief in the efficacy of governmental control was deeply implanted in the French mind. To regulate the police, to carry on war, to collect the money needed for the ordinary expenses of administration, would have been regarded as a most inadequate statement of the purposes for which government existed. In addition to such functions, it took charge of men's consciences; it sought to exterminate heresy and to suppress literature that might be injurious to religion or authority; it regulated the relations of the country with foreign lands and the details of internal industry, decided who might practice certain trades, what goods should be made and how they should be made, with what crops the field should be planted and in what manner its produce should be sold; it assisted the father who wished his son to be reformed, and the husband who

desired his wife to be put out of harm's way; it discharged all the duties which could be imposed on a paternal government that regarded nothing as foreign to its activity. Such principles had long been recognized, and were now received without question. There might be complaints as to the manner in which the government exercised its authority, but there was no demand for a restriction of its sphere of action; the clergy constantly insisted on interference by the state, merchants and farmers asked for it, and private persons of whatever rank solicited the aid of its protecting arm.

In all these respects the school of political thinkers who first exerted a large influence upon the public under Louis XV. were opposed to ancient and universally accepted traditions. It showed a striking originality in the economists when they asked, not that the government should lay down a new set of rules in commerce and in agriculture, but that it should make no rules, that it should leave such matters to the free choice of the individual; among all the new ideas to which the eighteenth century gave utterance, none was more novel in French thought than that the chief need of trade was to be let alone.

The Physiocrats confined themselves to economical teaching, but the Encyclopædists adopted similar principles and carried them further. Their demand was for liberty, not only in trade, but in thought, in literature, in freedom of individual action.

Rousseau's scheme of government was far removed from any that could be framed upon the theories of Montesquieu or Diderot or Alembert. He talked of liberty and so did they; but his conception of it was a different one. They had studied English institu-

tions, and hoped for an orderly system, in which the rights of the individual should be jealously guarded, in which checks should be placed upon the different branches of the administration, and the citizen should alike have his part in the state and be protected against its encroachments.

The government of which Rousseau dreamed, and the merits of which he described, was very differently organized from that of Louis XIV., but it was no less absolute. "I know of no system of slavery which has consecrated more fatal errors than the metaphysics of the 'Social Contract,'" wrote Benjamin Constant. A monarchy was to be replaced by a republic in which all citizens should have their part, but to the state thus organized the members, by their renunciation of individual freedom, gave power over every department of life and thought. Any check on the authority of the state was contrary to the fundamental theories on which Rousseau constructed his system of government. It was for the sovereign to fix the articles of civil faith, and those who refused to accept them could justly be banished; those who, having professed allegiance, showed by their conduct that their profession was false, could justly be put to death. The most fanatical of persecuting bishops would have been content with such a statement of the right to punish those who denied the faith. The belief required by Rousseau was different, but the means to secure its adoption were the same.

The omnipotent state could dictate a fraternal religion and punish the unfaithful, not, indeed, as impious, but as incapable of loving the law and unable to feel the affection they owed their associates; its power was no more restricted when it came to

regulate the conduct of its citizens in other respects. Each put his person and his fortune under the direction of the general will; he gave to the community the strength of which he was master, the goods of which he was owner; his liberty remained as an indivisible part of the whole; to an all-wise king succeeded an all-wise sovereign people. Composed, said Rousseau, of individual citizens, it could have no interest contrary to that of its members; no guarantee was required, because it was impossible that the whole should wish to injure any part; as nature gave to each man absolute power over his members, the "Social Contract" gave to the body politic an absolute power over those who composed it.

The power thus granted was sure to be wisely exercised by the imaginary beings whom Rousseau placed in conditions that could never exist, and for whom he devised his system of government. In a country where the community had the political intelligence that comes from constant experience in public affairs, such speculations would have found few admirers; the fallacies on which they rested would have needed no exposure; no one familiar with the workings of popular government would have been deceived by phrases which confused the individual with the other citizens who formed the state, which declared them all to be united by common interests and actuated by common virtues, which asserted that they would pass no unjust law because no one would be unjust to himself, and that there could be no question of surrendering liberty where the laws were the record of the common will. The experienced politician would have been equally apprehensive of a writer who declared that the public voice rarely, if ever, elevated to eminent positions those unfitted to fill them.

But in France the community had taken no part in administering their own affairs. If they began to doubt the wisdom of the government when ruled by a king, they saw no reason for setting bounds to its beneficent activity when it should register the desires of a people anxious only for its own happiness; the omnipotence which Rousseau demanded for the state was in harmony with principles that were accepted by all.

I have alluded to the interest taken in scientific pursuits by almost all the leading thinkers of the time; they were for the most part men of large information and broad study. Rousseau, on the other hand, was far from being a well-educated man, and there were few who exercised a tithe of his influence who were so entirely ignorant of history. In the "Social Contract," from which French statesmen in the Revolution drew inspiration, there was hardly a reference to French history; principles were sought to be established by the teachings of Lycurgus or the maxims of Plato, but no lessons were drawn from events that had occurred under Louis XI. or Henry IV.

His readers were not disturbed by such defects. The study of political history had formed no part of French education, and there were few books in the language from which a statesman could obtain any valuable information concerning former ages. Experience in actual political life would have exposed the fallacies of many of Rousseau's eloquent phrases to men who knew nothing of history, but the readers of the "Social Contract" were as ignorant of one as of the other, and they found in the pages of the great apostle of freedom advice which they were ready to

accept; they were told to disregard the compromises and inconsistencies of the past, and to construct their political system anew.

His writings were inspired by the intensity of a passionate nature, and were marked by an appearance of logical lucidity which has rarely been equaled. When they declared that a government in which all citizens should have a part would insure the happiness of each, they were fitted to exercise a prodigious effect upon the people to whom they were addressed. Rousseau exerted a greater influence on the political ideals of the generation than Voltaire and all the Encyclopædists. The French Revolution would have come if he had never written, but its course might not have been altogether the same, and it is probable that the French would have escaped some of the errors and follies into which they fell.

It was not only by schemes of government and political reformation that Rousseau charmed his admirers. At a period when an ancient society was wearied of its past, when formalities seemed empty and social traditions unprofitable, came the apostle of a new faith demanding simpler and truer modes of life, denouncing the artificial barriers established by a perverted society, bidding the corrupt product of a vitiated civilization to imitate the virtues of primitive man, exhorting mothers to care for their children, and advising those weary of the intercourse of man to find new joys in the communion of nature.

It will always be a question whether the doctrines of natural equality and social decadence which Rousseau taught with such eloquence were at first the result of profound conviction, or whether they were adopted by accident, and advocated with fervor when

the author saw the impression they produced on the public mind. Diderot said it was by his advice that Rousseau decided to argue in the negative, in answer to the question whether the sciences and arts had purified morals, and when the treatise had made the new author famous his social faith was fixed. Others have suggested with much plausibility that if Rousseau had found life prosperous and easy, if he had been reared in comfort and had been readily admitted to the society of the wealthy and well-bred, he might never have denounced the crime of property or the evil results of civilization.

These speculations are unimportant except for those who wish to judge the character of the man. Whether his political and social theories were first adopted by caprice, or whether they were fostered by the rankling of poverty in a man afflicted by a morbid sensitiveness and a most unusual vanity, his writings ripened the seeds of revolution which had already been sown. "The first man who inclosed a field and said It is mine," wrote Rousseau, "and who found people simple enough to believe him, was the founder of civil society;" what crimes and misery, he continued, humanity would have been spared, if the impostor had been exposed and his inclosure torn down.

The soil was ready for such doctrines. If we confine our definition of revolution to the actual overthrow of an established government, we must date the French Revolution from 1789; but if we consider the changes in intellectual beliefs that in time were sure to result in modifications of society and government, then revolution in France progressed during quarter of a century of Louis XV.'s reign. It was still possible to save the form of the ancient monarchy, but not to

preserve the old régime. That was doomed to destruction by the discontents, and the hopes which had already taken possession of the French mind, and the catastrophe arrived only fifteen years after the death of Louis the Well Beloved.

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